



THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Wintry showers

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NEWS

Spice Girls
vote Tory

PAGE 7



DEBATE

Do homosexuals
have to be gay?

PAGE 20



COMMENT

Suzanne Moore:
why I buy Barbies

PAGE 21

Major turns down 'sleaze' plea

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

The Prime Minister has rejected an anti-sleaze demand that companies employing MPs should not be allowed to bid for public contracts. The *Independent* has learned that at least three former ministers are linked to companies associated with bids for the £1.6bn sale of Ministry of Defence married quarters.

This is the deal that prompted Conservative MP Richard Shepherd to urge John Major to act to counter any perception of sleaze. In a letter to Mr Major, the MP pleaded: "I would suggest that if the Government announces that no public

contracts will go to any firm that employs a Member of Parliament, the question of 'sleaze' cannot reasonably arise." But the Prime Minister has turned him down.

While there is no suggestion of any impropriety in the latest cases, and current parliamentary and Whitehall rules on MP's conduct and government commercial contracts make no reference to the issue, Lord Nolan has recently been asked by Opposition spokesman Derek Foster to investigate the involvement of Tory interests in companies bidding for contracts.

Witnesses at a recent hearing of the Commons Select Committee on Defence revealed that Electra Fleming - currently under attack for

the terms of its purchase of Her Majesty's Stationery Office - was one of the backers for the lease-back deal, led by Japanese bank Nomura, for 2,370 MoD homes. The committee was told that the agreement had Mr Major's personal approval.

Electra Fleming was part of an unsuccessful consortium which bid for the MoD estates. Having succeeded, the Japanese company Nomura laid off some of its liability with United States-based finance company Black Rock, which in turn laid off 26.3m of liability with Electra Fleming.

Tom King, the former defence minister, is on the board of Electra Investment Trust plc, and former government chief whip Tim Renton is

a consultant to Robert Fleming Holdings Ltd - the parent companies which each own a half stake in Electra Fleming.

A spokesman for the investment bankers Merrill Lynch Europe Ltd told *The Independent* that it was a member of an unsuccessful consortium bidding for the MoD estates. Sir Archibald Hamilton, another former defence minister, is a parliamentary consultant with Merrill Lynch.

A senior member of the defence committee, Liberal Democrat Menzies Campbell, told *The Independent* last night: "The committee would have had to peruse the register of companies in microscopic detail to establish whether there was any

connection between a serving MP and any of these bids."

A similar complaint was made by Mr Shepherd last October in a letter to the Prime Minister, when he said: "A reading of the Register of Members' Interests would not necessarily indicate that a member might be in such a position..."

Mr Major recently replied: "The Government's policy on procurement is to achieve the best value for money, normally through competition. A blanket ban on firms employing MPs might well result in the rejection of suppliers able to offer good value for money."

But in a Commons debate last Tuesday, Mr Shepherd complained

of the "curse of commercial confidentiality" - and cited the sale of MoD housing as an example of unnecessary secrecy: "I understand that members of the Select Committee on Defence were given information that was not available to other members of the House..."

However, the information was available to members if they had commercial associations with commercial companies that wished to make a bid. That is wildly inappropriate."

Mr Renton told *The Independent* last night that as a consultant to Robert Fleming, he was not involved in bids made by Electra Fleming. "The first I knew of the HMO bid was when I read about it in the newspapers," As for its involvement with MoD housing, he said: "I know nothing. I am not on the board. I am not consulted."

Sir Archibald was not available for comment, and Mr King did not return *The Independent's* call.

A current Commons motion tabled by Labour frontbencher Brian Wilson says that the £54m sale of HMO to Electra Fleming was "hopelessly tainted and against the public interest". The motion says that Robert Fleming has donated £527,000 to the Conservative Party, while Electra Investment Trust, with Mr King and Tory peer Lord Vinson as board members, "has chipped in at least £40,000".

Barnsley chop puts Tories in minority

Rowan
Political Correspondent

Major was set to become prime Minister of a minority government early today as Labour headed for a comfortable victory in the Barnsley East by-election.

That result would officially wipe out the Government's Commons majority over all the other parties.

But with a Conservative backbencher, Sir John Gorst, having rejected the Tory whip in protest over emergency facilities at a local hospital, it leaves the Prime Minister's party in a minority for the first time since the Tories came to power under Baroness Thatcher.

John Prescott, deputy leader of the Labour Party, was planning to celebrate Labour's victory later today by taking the Barnsley East victory, Jeff Ennis, to Wirral South, where a second by-election is pending, to demand that Mr Major go to the country.

Mr Prescott said that he had lost the mandate to govern Britain, and said Labour would be stepping up its demands for a general election. Of the Barnsley result, he said: "It shows the country is braced off with the Tories."

Mr Prescott was hoping to celebrate another victory today with a by-election on Merseyside for the European Parliament.

With Labour defending a massive majority in Barnsley East after the death of Terry Patchett, the MP for the seat, the result was hardly in doubt.

But the loss of the Government's official majority will come as a further debilitating psychological blow to Conservative ministers and backbenchers.

It underlines the importance of the Ulster Unionists,

led by David Trimble, in propelling up the Government in no-confidence votes until a general election in the spring.

The Government is likely to be defeated on Monday in a vote on European fishing policy. However, senior ministers are expected to shrug off that defeat, as it did one year ago, to soldier on until April or May.

Senior Conservative MPs believe that Mr Trimble could help to bring the Government down in March, thus forcing a general election in April, to distance his party from the Government before the elections, and avoid being outflanked by the DUP, led by Ian Paisley.

Labour strategists believe the election could take place on 10 April, although Conservative Central Office would prefer 1 May to allow tax cuts in the Budget to be felt in pay packets. They are impatient from 1 April.

Mr Ennis, 44, was planning to take his seat next week, raising Labour demands for the Government's majority to be wiped out on the standing committees which consider government Bills.

The committees are supposed to reflect the composition of the Commons, and without a majority, the Government could face difficulty in getting through its business, including the Finance Bill and the NHS Primary Care Bill in the House of Lords.

But the Commons clerks have so far ruled out a change. They are insisting that the vacant Conservative seat in Wirral South, where a by-election is pending following the death of Barry Porter, remains Conservative until it changes hands.

The Government is holding off as long as possible.



Red reign: A Labour supporter canvasses in Barnsley. The party romped home in the by-election, reducing Mr Major's government to a minority administration. Photograph: Guzelian

Gulf troops denied safe pesticides

Ian Burrell

British soldiers were dosed in highly toxic organo-phosphate pesticides during the Gulf War, even though there was a factory making safer pesticides just half a mile from the Saudi Arabian hotel where Operation Desert Storm was planned.

The factory was set up by British scientists 15 years before hostilities began, but instead of using chemicals from the factory, army chiefs sent troops to local markets to buy cheap organo-phosphate pesticides (OPs) without adequate instructions for usage.

On Tuesday, Nicholas Soames, the defence minister, announced a £1.3m inquiry into illnesses suffered by Gulf War soldiers and admitted that OPs

were in OPs said the products they used were only labelled in Arabic and they could not understand the mixing instructions.

Scidco manufactures a range of pyrethroid products approved by the UK government. Although they are also subject to misuse, they are less easily absorbed through the skin and are more easily detoxified.

The Independent has established that the British pesticide factory was set up in Riyadh in 1976 by Wellcome.

Known as the Saudi Chemical Insecticide and Disinfectant Co (Scidco), it was a joint venture with local investors.

It had the capacity to have protected the British Army and its products were labelled in English, French and Arabic with clear instructions for use.

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British troops who became

Killer bug talks
Ministers were involved in urgent talks last night on measures needed to prevent more outbreaks of *E. coli* poisoning across Britain. Page 2

Blair reaches summit
As John Major headed to Dublin for probably his last European summit show-down, Tony Blair, the Labour leader, was already there forging ties and preparing to take his seat on the European stage. Page 13

Netanyahu rallies
Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, yesterday told settlers from the West Bank who entered Beit El, a settlement outside the autonomous Palestinian town of Ramallah, that they were "pioneers". Page 15

CONTENTS

The Broadsheet

Business & City 22-26

Comment 19-21

Foreign News 12-17

Gazette 18

Home News 2-11

Law Report 18

Leading Articles 19

Letters 19

Obituaries 18

Shares 24

Sport 27-30

Unit Trusts 26

The Tabloid

Architecture 6,7

Arts Reviews 18

Classical Music 16-16

Crossword 22

John Lytle 3

Listings 20,21

Pop Music 10-14

TV & Radio 23,24

Weather 22

KEEP
OFFICE
GRASS

Drinking this instead.

Keep office grass

news

Lesser Tory cracks over egghead's fall

With what pleasure did backbenchers on all sides of the House contemplate the fall from grace of D Willetts Esq? For Labour members this was quite an uncomplicated emotion. From their angle of vision Willetts was a supercilious enemy egghead – his nervous, twitchy manner and beady eye making him look like the heron that lives by the pond at All Souls.

Tories had more interesting reasons for exulting at Mr Willetts' demise. The most obvious was that the appointment of a new paymaster general (a title of Heseltinean grandiloquence) and the resulting reshuffle meant that someone – until then languishing on the back benches – now finds himself enjoying a



All Harry had to do was not mention Willetts, sleaze and fibbing. He really should have managed it

month or two of constrained power.

But by far the most significant reason for their pleasure is the hatred that the dim harbour for the very bright. Imagine how galling it is to watch this brain-on-legs swan into the top flight at an early age while the chap who has been there years – who has horse sense, who knows what the voters want and how to give to 'em – has to settle for being chair of the Anglo-Andorran Parliamentary Forum. When the Labour Party's Brian Wilson described Mr Willetts as a man with "two brains and no common sense", he tapped deep into an anti-intellectualism that is shared by many MPs.

Certainly, as I peered down from my eyrie at the assembly below yesterday, I could see

many MPs who would serve their country well by resigning their seats; unlike the able Mr Willetts, they never would be missed. And little could exemplify Mr Major's luck better than the fact that one of the silliest of his MPs had drawn first slot in the draw to ask him a question.

Harry Greenway, the member for Ealing North since 1979, managed somehow to be a rebuke to many professions at once. He was once a headmaster of a large school, yet behaves like the class joker of 2M. He sits on the council of the Open University, but even his most partisan colleagues snigger when he gets up to speak. Yesterday all Mr Greenway had to do was to ask Mr Major some simple questions about the social chapter or

tax, and then sit down again. Only one topic – Willetts, sleaze and fibbing – had to be avoided.

And, given that his choice was the British veto, he really should have managed it. Could the Prime Minister confirm that "he will not abandon the British veto [pause] or rather, dissemble the veto"? "Dissemble!" Where had we heard that word before? Dissemble! shouted the Labour benches, happily. What Willetts was accused of! It was, of course, unnecessarily inserted in such a way as to give maximum discomfort to the PM and maximum assistance to Mr Prescott (standing in for Mr Blair, who was away practising to be Prime Minister).

But why had Mr Greenway done it? Had the whips, noticing his name on the order paper and – after having cast their eyes to heaven – taken him aside and begged "Whatever you do, Harry, don't say dissemble?" Then like the bloke meeting Cyrano de Bergerac for the first time – and straight enjoined him to state nothing – had Harry's synapses gone haywire, propelling the word "dissemble" from his memory, shooting it past his consciousness and straight into his mouth?

Whatever the explanation, it was the worst possible start to Prime Minister's Question Time; and will have left Mr Major reflecting that the worst combination in politics is no brain and no common sense.

significant shorts

Sex attacker murders widow, 74

An elderly widow was killed to death in a sex attack at her home.

Alice Ryé, 74, was found by neighbours semi-naked, tied up and stabbed through the heart in a bedroom. The house was not ransacked.

Detectives believe the killer may have been a caller who was either invited or pushed his way into Mrs Ryé's home in Spital, Wirral, Cheshire, after knocking at her door at tea-time on Tuesday. There was no forced entry.

Camelot fights bookmakers' rival game

Camelot, the National Lottery operator, has asked the Crown Prosecution Service to investigate a bookmakers' plan to launch an alternative to the lottery.

Camelot says the game, organised by the country's three biggest bookmakers Ladbrokes, William Hill and Coral – is illegal and hopes prevent the proposed launch next week.

The lottery, called "49", will take place six times a week at the end of each day racing. It will be transmitted by satellite television to betting shops where a lottery machine similar to Camelot will issue numbers, enabling gamblers to bet on the likelihood of single or several numbers appearing from a total of 49. A £1 stake will win £5.50 for one right number, £45 for two, £511 for three, £6,561 for four and £10,000 for five.

Camelot said the game would have a detrimental effect on the amount of money going to good causes. The bookmakers said they had been advised that the game was legal. Charlie Bain

Countdown to bill for £20bn

Industry may have to pay up to £20bn to reprogram computers with the new date at the turn of the millennium.

The "Millennium Compliance", or "Y2000", problem represented a challenge for small and large businesses alike, said a report by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology. A vast number of computers of all kinds, from desk-top PCs to the highest level mainframes, were likely to crash when their internal clocks reached the year 2000.

Most would recognise the date as 1900, with possibly catastrophic results. The report, written by civil servants for the benefit of MPs, said that responses of companies to the threat of the Y2000 problem are mixed, with some failing to recognise the need for action.

The private meeting at the academy in Piccadilly, central London, was presented with a plan that would set up a "Review board" to help manage the RA's financial affairs. A leaked auditor's report last week exposed a £3m debt. The Royal Academy's greatest treasure is Michelangelo's *Madonna and Child* which would fetch at least £5m; but Mr Gordon is firmly against selling it.

Royal Academy broods on cash crisis

Some of Britain's senior artists were last night discussing a package of modernising reforms to alleviate the financial crisis at the Royal Academy, writes David Lister.

A three-hour-long general assembly of academics heard proposals by the RA's secretary, David Gordon, and the President, Sir Philip Dowson, to change the way the 228-year-old institution is run.

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Long flight for sick Fiennes

Sir Ranulph Fiennes was being examined in hospital after abandoning his attempt to become the first man to walk solo across the Antarctic. The explorer was flown to Punta Arenas, on the southern tip of Chile, in seven-hour emergency flight from the wilderness where he had developed an agonising kidney stone complaint.

Sold on the 'Archers'
An *Archers* addict for the original 78 recording of the programme's theme. Hopeful fans pack auction room at Ph London. The success bidder's identity is secret.

At Christie's in London, a 400-year-old gold ring found in a field near Foulsham, Norfolk, fetched £20,700. Research had established that the original owner probably a Thomas An of Fowisham (sic), may Norwich in 1611, or his

In a sale at Swindon, top tier of the Duke and Duchess of York's 198 wedding cake sold for £10,000. The 10-inch-square decorated tier featuring entwined initials AS, bought by John Bell, a magazine editor in Florida for a competition. In June, paid £640 for a piece of the Prince and Princess of Wales's wedding cake.



Michelangelo's *Madonna and Child*: The RA is reluctant to sell it to meet its £3m debts

Prescott savours taste of blood in Willetts affair

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

John Prescott, the deputy Labour leader, yesterday said Labour would be pursuing the "guilty men" at the heart of the Government after the resignation of David Willetts as Paymaster General.

"I don't believe that Mr Willetts acted as a sole operator and made mistakes. This man is at the very heart of the government operation," said Mr Prescott.

Andrew Mitchell, a former whip, is expected to be the first to be questioned under oath under the new code of conduct by the committee on standards and privileges in the wake of the Willetts report.

"I cannot believe for a moment throughout this period of time there haven't been close discussions," Mr Prescott said. "Mr Mitchell was a whip appointed to this committee whose job solely was to try and cover up for the Government. That is at the heart of this question, more than Mr Willetts. He has resigned but there are other guilty people involved in this operation. It involved government right at the core of its operation."

Mr Mitchell, now a social se-

curity minister, tipped off the Chief Whip in a note that he had spoken to the clerk of the predecessor committee investigating the cash-for-questions allegations against another minister, Neil Hamilton.

As a member of the committee, he had a right to speak to the clerk. But ministers said an apology was likely to be made to avoid any embarrassment for the Government. "The lesson we have learnt from the Willetts affair is to apologise," said a minister.

The Standards and Privileges Committee next week will question Sir Gordon Downey, the parliamentary ombudsman, on his investigation into the Hamilton affair.

The Government moved quickly to limit the damage with a mini-shuffle to fill the gaps caused by Mr Willetts' resignation – Michael Bates was promoted from the whip's office

to Paymaster General; Giles Brandreth was promoted to replace Mr Bates; and Matthew Carrington, MP for Fulham, was appointed as a whip.

Mr Willetts also rejected calls by Mr Prescott for him to step down from politics. He said he would be continuing as the MP for Havant, and ministers, led by Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, rallied round to say he would be back as a backbencher after the election.

There were fears among the Labour leadership that the ferocity of Mr Prescott's attack could lead to a Tory backlash on the committee. Leadership sources were keen to refocus their attack on Mr Hamilton. A senior source said: "Willetts is a dead body on the battlefield. He is a distraction and so is Mitchell. We should be focusing on the main issue, which is corruption at the heart of the Government."

Nearly 2,000 prison officers' jobs have been lost since 1993 and staff claim they do not have the numbers to cope with the record jail population. There are currently 58,516 inmates in Britain's jails, guarded by 23,000 officers, a ratio of 1:2.5. When prison staff levels last slipped to 23,000 in 1992, the jail population was only 42,500, a ratio of 1:1.8.

John Boddington, chairman of the Prison Officers' Association, said unpaid overtime might be banned if the talks did not produce promises of more resources. Ian Burrell

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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Millennium plan is rejected

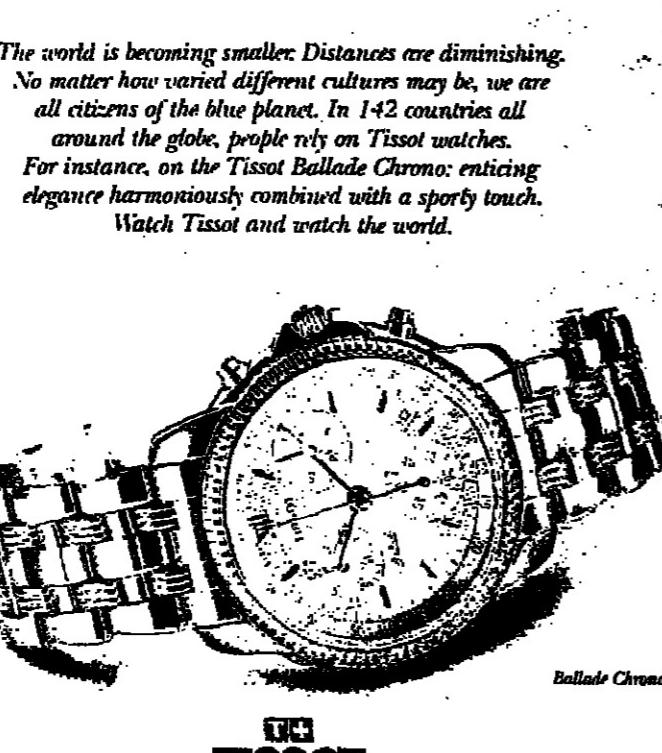
Concern about budget causes further delay to proposals for exhibition at Greenwich

the exhibition but until a realistic budget can be produced by Millennium Central, the scheme's future remains in doubt.

In a sense, the organisers and the exhibition designers, Imagination, have the commission over a barrel. It is far too late for any other company to be brought into organise the project if it is to be completed in time for the autumn 1999 deadline.

In September, Mrs Bottomley asked Dr Cunningham for his support for the draft budget plan. He refused to give an open-ended commitment to

watch the world



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Failed mortar attack raises IRA fears

lethal means to try to change the Government's mind on the question of Sinn Fein's entry into multi-party talks.

This follows John Major's rejection, earlier this month, of the republican proposition that he should guarantee entry into negotiations if the IRA were to declare another cessation of violence. This deadlock, together with intelligence assessments that the IRA was preparing to

a new offensive, meant that Wednesday night's incident came as no surprise.

It began with a telephoned warning, which included a recognised IRA codeword, that a mortar had been left close to the back gate of Girdwood security base near the republican New Lodge area of north Belfast.

Security patrols were sent to investigate but, suspicious of a possible trap, used another exit from the base. This precaution appears to have saved lives, since terrorists were waiting to fire a mortar at close range into a vehicle travelling from the back gate.

The device was concealed in an alley, inside one of the ubiquitous "wheelie bins" which are appearing, the terrorists abandoned the device.

Last week, three similar bombs were found hidden behind a bricked-up well in the kitchen of a house in west Belfast, together with more than thirty cassette-type incendiary devices.

هذا من الأصل

Quarantine laws in the dog house

Celebrity dog owners are delighted that the RSPCA is backing their hard-fought campaign for passports for pets. Their four-legged friends may soon be able to jet around the world without the threat of miserable months in quarantine



Collage: Miss Lucy (top left, far right), whose untimely end her owner blames on UK rules; David Hockney and his dog (right) and the Pattersons with Whisky, who faces quarantine. Photographs: Rex Network

Clare Garner

Dog owners were elated yesterday as the RSPCA said it was in favour of abolishing the compulsory quarantine rules for cats and dogs coming into the UK from EU and other countries recognised by the World Health Organisation as rabies-free.

Celebrities who have campaigned passionately for the abolition of the 95-year-old British quarantine laws requiring domestic pets to spend six months in quarantine at a cost of up to £2,000 to their owners were delighted by the society's backing.

The charity's campaign for reform follows a survey which found that 86 per cent of the public would accept an alternative to quarantine if it could be properly implemented and proved to keep Britain rabies-free. The NOP survey, commissioned by the RSPCA, also found that 72 per cent of people said they would find a vaccination system an acceptable alternative to quarantine.

Peter Davies, the RSPCA's director general, said yesterday that a system of vaccination, blood testing and permanent identification for dogs and cats would provide Britain with "an equal, if not greater, protection from rabies as quarantine." He is

now urging the Government to commission a full-scale risk assessment of both quarantine and alternative systems and implement the "most humane and effective system" as quickly as possible.

The British Veterinary Association has yet come out for change, but vets are known to be six to one in favour. In October a group of distinguished vets came out in favour of changing the laws. They included Lord Soulby (the only vet in the House of Lords), Professor Richard Halliwell, and the writing vet Dr Bruce Fogle.

Jilly Cooper, a member of the pressure group Passports for Pets, said: "It's wonderful, wonderful. Passports for Pets have been bearing away lobbying and suddenly the mighty RSPCA have swung on our side. They are the ones that people listen to, so the fact that they have realised that it's cruel to keep animals in quarantine and it's a pointless exercise is fantastic."

Besides putting an end to the "awful sadness from both sides - for owners and animals", the abolition of the anti-rabies regulations would - on a personal level - herald a string of Continental canine adventures for Ms Cooper. Since the age of 14, she

has wanted to rescue a mistreated Spanish mongrel. "Every time I went I'd see some dog being beaten up in Spain... But then the prospect of taking it from one hell to put it in another hell - quarantine - was too much."

If the rules are changed, she will

be able to holiday with Hero, a lurcher, and Bessie, a labrador. "They can go to Paris on cheap-day returns," she said. "They can go and buy drink. I'd love to go to my brother's house in France and work out there for two or three months and take the dogs with me. It's stupid things like that."

It is a cause which has united a myriad of high-profile people from David Hockney and Elizabeth Hurley to Chris Patten, the Governor of Hong Kong who, unless the rules are changed, will have to be paired for six months from his Norfolk terriers, Whisky and Soda, when he returns

to Britain next summer.

Screna Linley, the proud owner of a bull terrier, recently signed up to Passports for Pets, joining other names such as Barbara Taylor Bradford, Elton John and Mark Birley. Passports for Pets, which was set up in 1994 by Lady Fretwell, wife of the former ambassador to Paris, now has 3,000 paid-up members.

Lord Rothermere, the Associated Newspapers press baron, is a member of Lady Fretwell's Committee of Honour.

His concern for the plight of dogs in quarantine is reflected in the *Daily Mail*'s prominent coverage of the "barbarous", "antiquated" and "cruel" system. Many papers highlighted the story of how Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Stear's retriever, Hunter, died in quarantine from the "effects of stress and environmental deprivation."

Sir Michael wrote an open letter to Mr Davies, director general of the RSPCA, saying: "Young Hunter died alone in his cell. He had served five months and four days of his six-month sentence; he was due to be set free on October 23, just a few days after his second birthday."

The former film star Anne Aubrey shares Mr Lowe's feelings. Her poodle, Suki, was quarantined last year when the actress returned home to Norfolk after nine years in Spain.

"If I'd known what it was going to be like, I'd never have returned from Spain until Suki's death," she said afterwards.

The high cost of keeping Britain rabies-free

Clare Garner

Only the UK and Iceland now insist upon six months quarantine.

Sweden and Norway, rabies-free for longer than the UK, successfully introduced a vaccine-based system in May 1994.

In New Zealand, a dog or cat coming from a rabies-free country is now restricted to the owner's home for 30 days.

Japan, also rabies-free, has no quarantine for animals from rabies-free countries and only 14 days' quarantine for animals from elsewhere provided they have a certificate of vaccination and a health certificate.

Last year 5,394 dogs and 4,126 cats were committed to quarantine. Although the animals affected by the law are not particularly numerous,

their owners are often high-profile and know how to run a campaign.

Since 1972, 2,500 out of 170,000 animals in quarantine have died, none from rabies.

This year, for the first time, one case of bat rabies was recorded in the UK.

The average cost of the required six-month quarantine is £1,500.

The RSPCA promotes anti-rabies vaccination for dogs and cats along with an identity chip to establish ownership and confirmation of inoculation.

Those who can afford to do so can get a repeat of their pet and have it done for £25, otherwise the RSPCA will do it for £5.

Campaign groups, among them Vets in Support of Change, insist advances in rabies vaccination and the

scope for implanting identification microchips in dogs means quarantine is no longer necessary for animals from rabies-free countries.

Some government ministers argue that it would be expensive to set up a simple system to check animals and their documents at a few selected points.

The Swedes run such a system which admits 10,000 pets a year at a total cost to the owner of £400,000.

In the UK owners pay some £12m a year to have their animals quarantined. There has not been a single case of rabies in the UK, in or out of quarantine, for 26 years, except the bat.

The quarantine laws have resulted in widespread smuggling.

BBC closes Today poll as Labour memo surfaces

Charlie Bain

The BBC was forced to close the first round of polling for its annual Today Programme Personality of the Year award yesterday after discovering an "organised attempt" by staff at the Labour party to distort the voting in favour of the Labour leader, Tony Blair.

Staff in charge of producing the shortlist for the Radio 4 competition said they had received an anonymous memo which had been circulated to every member of staff in the Labour Party, urging them to vote for Mr Blair.

The note was sent out by the Audience Participation Unit, a newly established department whose role is to encourage members to write to newspapers and attend political TV shows pushing the party line.

It told recipients they could fax nominations to the BBC, but advised them it would be "preferable" if they used a fax machine which did not identify the sender with the Labour Party.

Its purpose, it told recipients, was to "avoid a repeat of last year when John Major won" - in fact the Prime Minister came second - by getting supporters to nominate Tony Blair.

A statement issued by the BBC said last night: "We deeply deplore any attempt to interfere with what is intended to be a spontaneous opportunity for the programme's listeners to express their point of view."

"With great reluctance and sincere apologies to those listeners who may have left their voting until the last minute, we have concluded that the poll should be closed forthwith."



John Humphrys, one of the presenters of Radio 4's Today programme (left), and Tony Blair

be in the audience of political programmes."

When asked about the attempt to distort the poll in Dublin last night, Mr Blair said: "I know absolutely nothing about it at all but I think that these things should be done in the proper way."

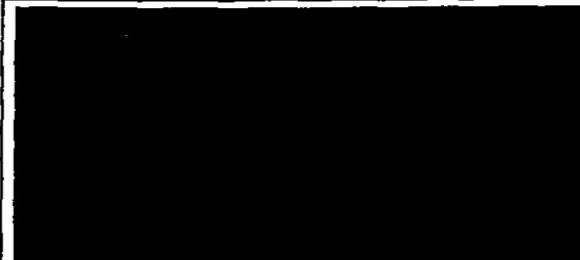
Conservative Party Chairman, Dr Brian Mawhinney, said: "The Labour Party has been caught red-handed trying to cheat. What has been uncovered by the BBC is a fundamentally dishonest and dishonest activity by the Labour Party."

Yesterday's discovery is the second time the Today poll has been sabotaged this decade. In 1990, the year Baroness Thatcher and Michael Heseltine won the award, a prominent Hindu

politician was disqualified after a number of his British supporters tried to rig the voting. Lal Krishan Advani, leader of the Bharatiya Janata party, was removed from the shortlist after BBC employees noticed that a number of votes had been cast in the same hand writing.

It comes hot on the heels of a second attempt to rig this year's BBC Sports Personality of the Year. Earlier in the week, organisers had to disqualify footballer Justin Fashanu from the competition after being bombarded with e-mail votes for the player who was a 300-1 outsider. They had to purge the system of a second intrusion, when the message "Let's get Damon Hill disqualified" appeared with frightening regularity on the Internet soccer pages.

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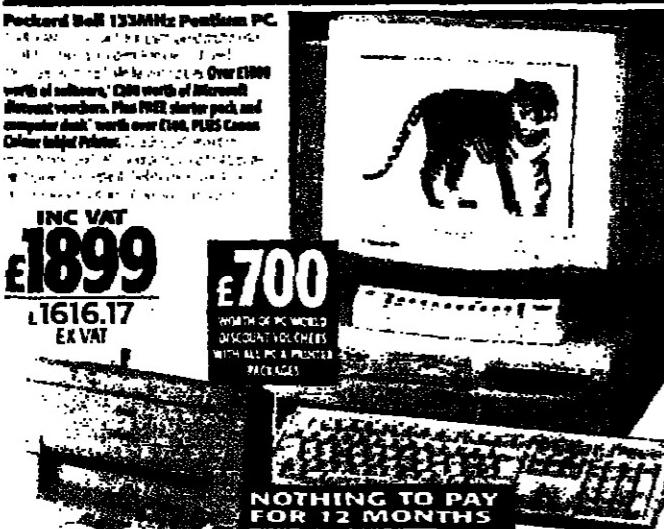
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news

Motorists wince at victims' NHS bill

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

Proposals to make negligent drivers pay for their victims' National Health Service treatment provoked a wave of protest yesterday from motorists' groups and insurers.

Despite an estimated saving of £120m a year for the NHS which would flow from the scheme, there were warnings that it would result in soaring insurance costs, more hit-and-run incidents and hidden bureaucratic and legal costs.

The protests came after the Law Commission, the Government's law-reform body, suggested that the NHS should have the right to recoup the costs of treatment.

Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, said that the idea, proposed by the commission in a consultation paper, would have to be carefully scrutinised before the Government could endorse it.

The 1988 Road Traffic Act already obliges insurers liable for road-accident injuries to pay the "reasonable" expenses of hospitals, subject to statutory capping, while private medical insurers are able to recoup treatment costs from defendants' insurers across the board. The commission said that there was a "strong case" for the NHS similarly to be able to claw back its costs. Professor Andrew Burrows, a commissioner, said: "We think it is particularly important to raise for public debate the question whether the NHS should be given a right to recoup from those who negligently cause injury, the cost of free health care provided to victims."

Precedents for the state clawing back already exist, such as the right of the Department of Social Security to recoup welfare benefits.

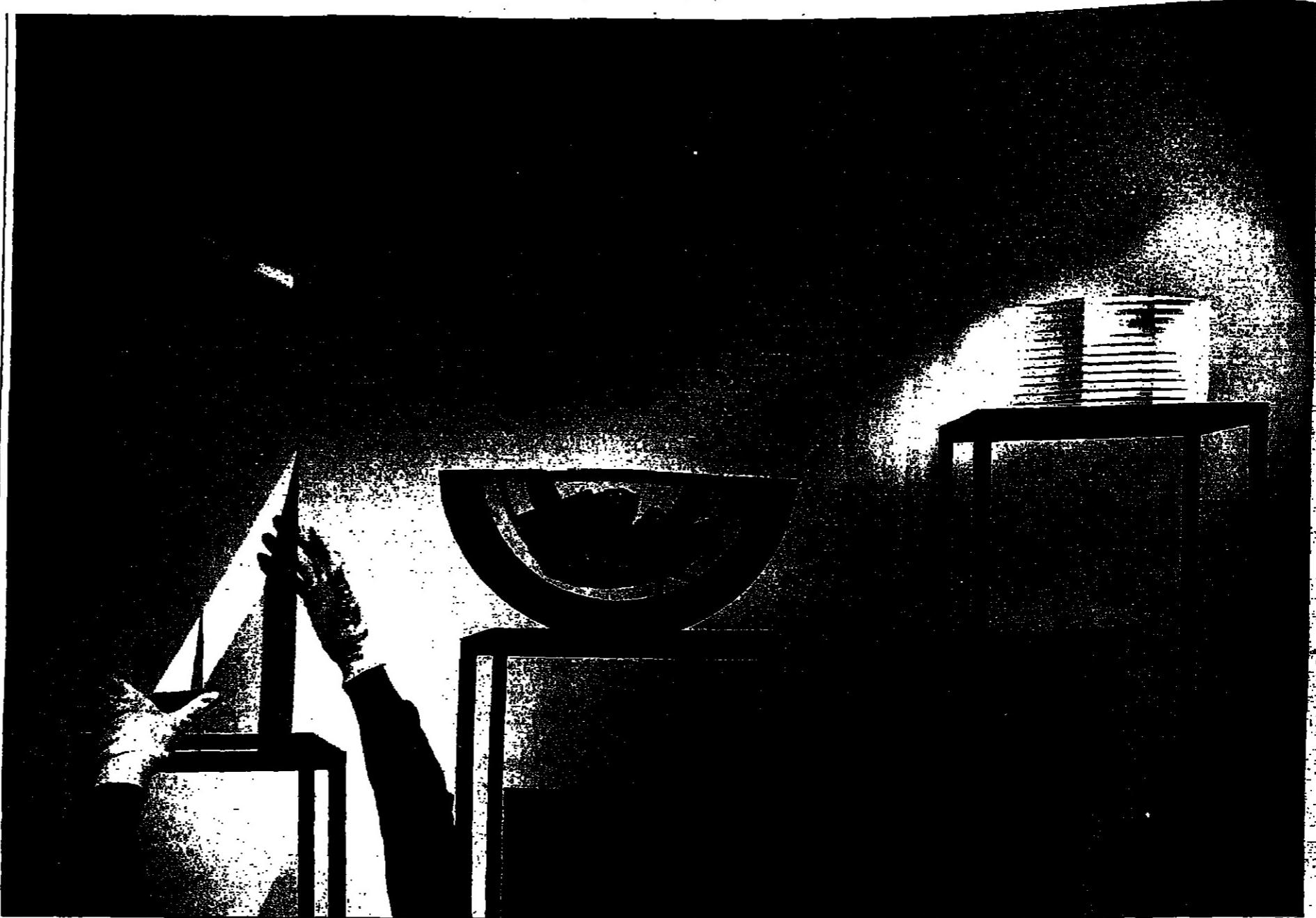
The cost of treating accident victims on the NHS is estimated at £1bn a year although only 12 per cent are successful in bringing negligence claims. The commission says that if a scheme were introduced, it should take the form of the NHS having a direct claim against a defendant after the victim has secured damages.

A spokeswoman for the National Association of Health Authorities, the Trusts said the association was interested in the proposal but concerned at potentially massive bureaucratic costs. "On the surface, it looks very good, but we would have to look at the cost of recouping the money," she said.

She added: "It is a very important proposal because we do not want the NHS to be disadvantaged in the comparison with the private sector, which is already able to exercise this power."

But a spokeswoman for the Automobile Association said the plan would add to insurance costs for all motorists, both those who caused accidents through negligence and those who were safe drivers. She said: "There are a million uninsured drivers already and we believe this will simply push the figure higher."

Edmund King, head of campaigns at the Royal Automobile Club, said: "This will create a bureaucratic nightmare. The motorists already contributes heavily towards the National Health Service through the taxes levied on road users."



Glass act: Some of the works by Czech and Slovak sculptors on sale today at The Studio Glass Gallery in London. It is hoped they will raise £60,000 for a Sue Ryder home for the elderly in Prague. They are (from left), Journey to Blue by Jan Frydrych, Cradle of Time by Bohumil Elias and Special Composition by Vaclav Cigler. Photograph: David Rose

Man denies link in Leah ecstasy chain

The man accused of buying the ecstasy tablet that killed Leah Bens yesterday denied any involvement in supplying drugs to her.

Stephen Packman, 18, of Laindon, Essex, has been accused of buying the ecstasy that killed 18-year-old Leah in November last year. But he told Norwich Crown Court he was not involved.

Mr Packman told the court yesterday that Smith was lying.

"I didn't offer to buy drugs for anyone else or for him. He [Smith] feels that he can get himself out of trouble by getting me involved ... I was not involved in any of this."

Mr Packman said he had never taken drugs and never been involved in dealing drugs or handling drugs. He said he now felt "disgusted" with Smith

for alleging that he was involved in the drugs chain.

"Because we were such good friends, I suppose he thought I would take the blame with him," Mr Packman added.

The court has been told that Mr Packman approached the head doorman at Rael's - Patrick O'Mahoney - after hearing that he wanted to speak

to him. Mr Packman's conversation with Mr O'Mahoney was taped by the *News of the World* newspaper. On the tape, Mr Packman appears to admit buying the drugs from a dealer at the nightclub.

But Mr Packman told the court yesterday that he was "paranoid" during the conversation with Mr O'Mahoney.

The case was adjourned until today.

Spice Girls
new lead

Steve Bognar

In an interview in

the original Massachus

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"We love Maggie": The group have named the former prime minister 'first Spice Girl' Photomontage: Jonathan Anstee

Spice Girls vote Thatcher the new leader of their band

Steve Boggan

It would be difficult to imagine Baroness Thatcher in hot pants, a spandex vest and patent-leather thigh boots, but yesterday that is precisely what we were invited to do.

In an interview likely to cause panic in equal measure at Tony Blair's Central Office and Labour HQ, the Honourable Lady was named as the first Spice Girl by the band that is influencing an entire generation of first-time voters.

More importantly, and infinitely easier on the imagination, came the news that the Spice Girls are AGAINST monetary union, over-reliance on the Welfare State, John Major's looks and Tony Blair's taxation policies, and FOR a referendum on rejection of the original Maastricht Treaty, hereditary peers and Tony Blair's hairstyle.

The weighty revelations came during an interview this week's Spectator magazine. The columnist Simon Sebag Montefiore, 31 and unmarried, was granted an hour with the five women - aged 18 to 24 - after the Smash Hits Awards Ceremony in London two weeks ago.

His problem - besides the distraction of the women "glistening with sweat ... their

ability, he's not hiding behind some smooth facade. He can't rely on his looks, can he?"

On Tony Blair: "We met Tony Blair and he seemed nice enough," said Victoria. But that wasn't enough, declared Geri: "His hair's all right, but we don't agree with his tax policies. He's just not a pair of safe hands with the economy."

On Europe: "It's been a terrible trick on the British people," said Victoria. "The Euro-bureaucrats are destroying every bit of national identity and individuality. Let me give you an example - those new passports are revolting, an insult to our kingdom, our independence. We must keep our national individuality."

The idea for the interview was Mr Sebag Montefiore's. "It was light-hearted but there is a serious side," he said. "The Spice Girls are influencing a whole generation of youngsters and no one really knows how that generation thinks."

"It was a very pleasant interview. These are no bimbos. I expected them to espouse typical left-wing pop-star politics, with a few pathetic ideas on the legalisation of heroin and some fuzzy thoughts on individuality and community policies, but I found them bright, articulate and with a full grasp of the great issues of the day."

Teachers rush for early retirement

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

One in six teachers over 50 is rushing to retire next Easter to beat a government clampdown on pensions according to a union survey.

Figures released yesterday by the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers suggest over 11,700 teachers want to take early retirement on 31 March nearly 3,000 more than usually opt to go early in a whole year.

Union general secretary Nigel de Gruchy warned of a "crisis of teacher supply" in the summer term of 1997 in the wake of predicted mass departures. He suggested that the Government's attempt to keep older, more experienced teachers from leaving by making early retirement harder had backfired.

The teaching world has been

thrown into turmoil over early retirements since the Government announced proposals last month to change the terms of the teachers' pension fund.

It wants to shift the burden of premature retirement costs from the fund to employers, mainly local education authorities and further education colleges.

The move is being billed as an attempt to hold on to experienced staff, but is also intended to stem a steadily increasing drain on the pension fund.

The proposals, now out to consultation, will come into force on 1 April if approved. Local education authorities say they will make early retirement for teachers prohibitively expensive, and warn that burnt-out staff will now be forced to stay on until they are 60.

The NASUWT figures are based on a survey of 50 LEAs, which revealed that 16 per cent

of teachers over 50 wanted to go. More are expected to follow as the implications of the changes become known to more staff, and there will be further departures through redundancy and sickness.

Teaching unions claim the deadline will cause particular problems because it falls in the middle of the academic year, leaving some classes with a change of teacher just before exams.

They also suggest the long-term effect of the changes will be a build-up of older, more costly staff in schools - draining budgets and ultimately blocking posts which could have gone to new teachers entering the profession.

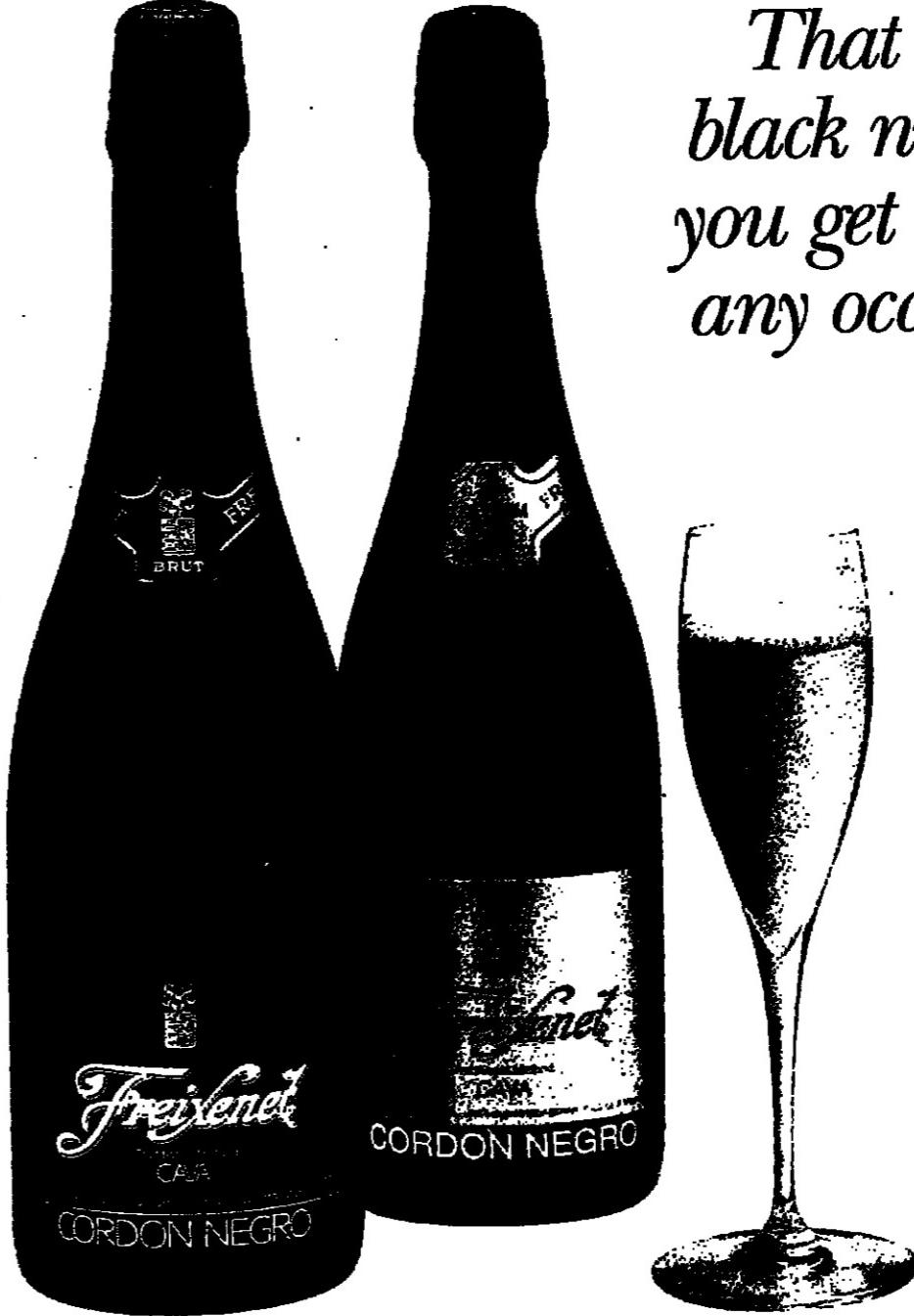
The Department for Education and Employment yesterday warned that employers would have to "look very carefully at their staffing needs for next summer term" if they let many teachers go early before Easter.

The unions have all pledged to lobby ministers over the pensions fund changes, but privately acknowledge they have little chance of securing a change of heart. They would also have difficulty winning public sympathy for teachers insisting on exercising their right to retire at 50. Instead, they plan to focus their campaigns on winning more consultation time, with a later date for implementing the changes.

The NASUWT is calling for an overhaul of the way the teachers' pension scheme is run. It wants employers' and teachers' contributions to be invested rather than paid into the Treasury. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers yesterday warned its 15,000 members not to be panicked by the changes into setting up new personal pensions.

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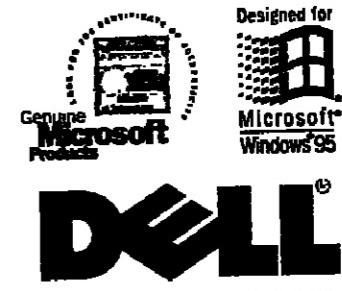
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politics

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

SCORING THE EXCHANGES

John Prescott
6/10
John Major
4/10

PRESOCOTT'S ATTACK

Prescott ingeniously combined a report showing the tax burden has risen since 1992 with the report by the Standards and Privileges committee. He asked whether the PM would "guarantee at the next general election that any promise he makes will be given on paper." The Conservative record of 16 ministerial resignations was the worst in record for any government in British history. Major tried to be patronising: "I've no doubt the Hon Member for Hartlepool would be very proud of his pup after having heard today's soundbite" - a reference to Paddy Ashdown.

THEMES OF THE DAY

- Harry Greenway (C, Ealing North) summed up the British veto in Europe.
- Irvin Patnick (C, Sheffield Hallam) Budget and Europe
- Paddy Ashdown joining the Single Currency
- John Hutton (L, Nottingham) Tax bill break
- Chris Mullin (L, Sunderland South) Creeping influence of News International

GOOD DAY



Irvine Patnick's
question on business in Europe
and John Major to criticise the
Labour Party for pledging to sign
up to the Social Chapter "regardless
of the British interest".

QUIP OF THE DAY



Tim Renton (C, Stevenage) referred to a newspaper article by the Chancellor, headlined "Britain can be champs in Europe, like Manchester United". John Major replied: "If my honourable friend will forgive me, I often have enough trouble with my own football team".

UNANSWERED QUESTION



Campbell-Savours (L, Workington) managed to corner the Prime Minister over tax asking whether the government figures on taxation showed that far more of average family income would be paid to the Government ... yes or no? Major said he had already answered the question twice.

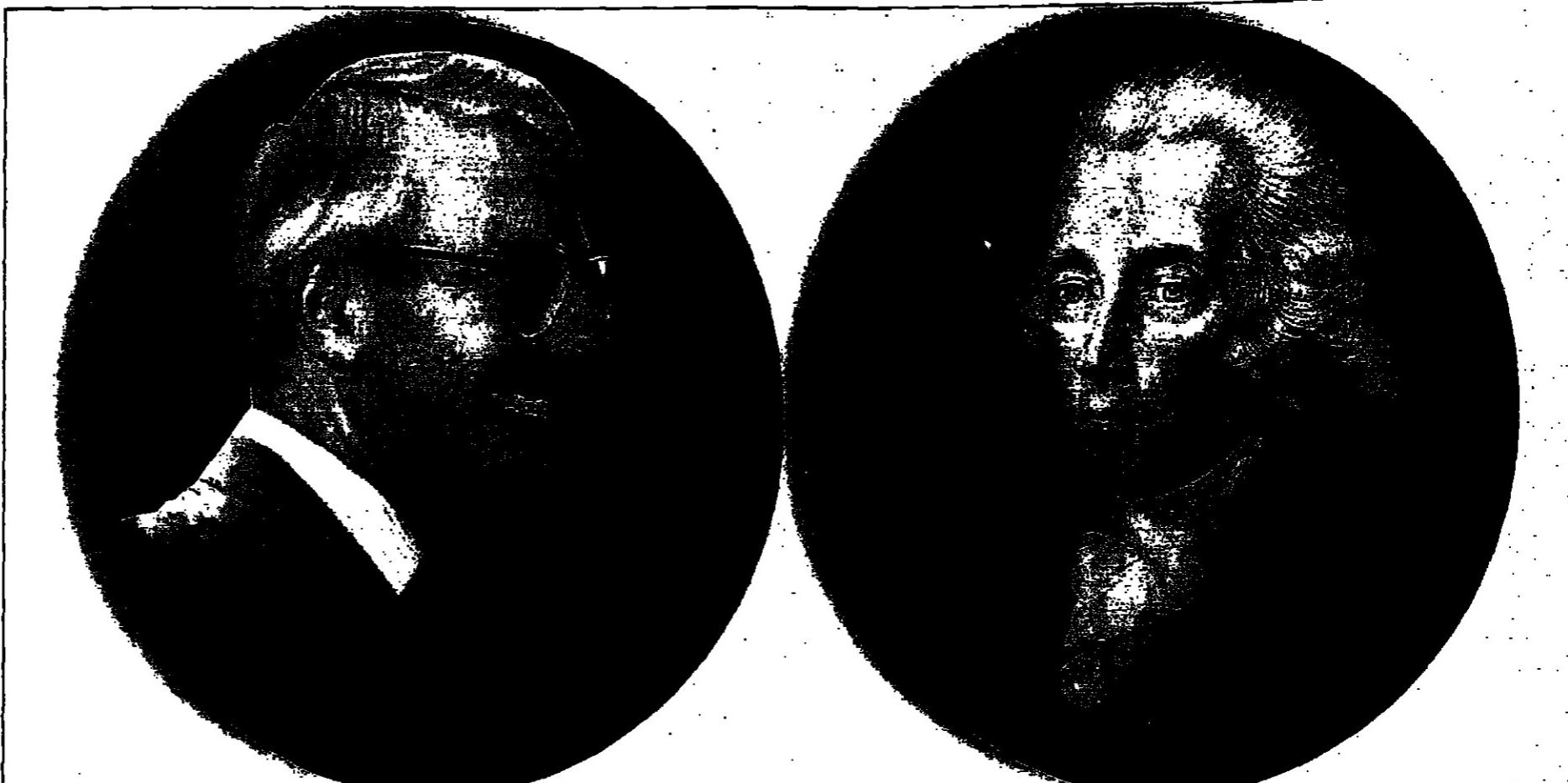
CREEP OF THE DAY



Sir David Hunt preached about the "outstanding reputation" of the Civil Service and criticised Labour leaks, saying it was damaging the government and Parliament. This allowed the Prime Minister to attack recent Labour comments welcoming leaks.

Compiled by Sam Coates

'The Corn Laws divided the Tories for 25 years; today they are as split on Europe'



History repeats itself: Robert Peel's attempt to repeal the Corn Laws in 1846 caused as great a split in the Tory party as John Major faces today over Europe

Anthony Bevins

Political Editor

The Conservatives are as split over Europe as they were over the Corn Laws, which divided the party for more than 25 years in the last century, a Cabinet source told *The Independent* yesterday.

The source added the warning: "Divisive parties can't expect to win elections."

He said that Labour was just as divided as the Conservative Party, but it was better at concealing its rifts.

Dissident Tories had been causing difficulties for years, but they had become more prominent because of the Government's small majority, because of their promotion of some newspapers.

The frank admission of the depth of the Tory rift was delivered as the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, opened the second day of a Commons debate on Europe - with a blunt warning to Brussels that any Conservative government would be pressing for a multi-tier Europe.

He told the House that Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, had said that the hour of truth was approaching when the United Kingdom "would have to decide whether it believed in Europe as a free trade area, or as a political union."

"It is reminiscent of choices which used to be urged upon British governments: Commonwealth or Europe? America or Europe? These have always been false choices because reality lies between such poles."

The European Union was more than a free trade area because of the single market, backed by supranational rules and institutions like the European Court. "But if Europe is more than a free trade area, it is also less than a federal state and must remain so."

And we must ensure that flexibility cannot be used by others to escape the obligations of an open single market, a strong competition policy, and a common commercial policy.

"Above all, we must ensure that if groups in the Union want to make use of our common institutions for their own purposes, they have the agreement of all those with a stake in those institutions," Mr Rifkind suggested during the Tory conference that the Government would veto any attempt to hijack the Brussels machinery for projects that were not approved.

A Government source said that there was no question of John Major voting an inter-governmental conference agreement at Amsterdam in June - because votes were never taken.

If the Conservatives won the next election, it would be clear to EU partners that the UK would reject a package that did not meet Mr Major's requirements on fisheries quota-hops-

If Europe is
more than a free
trade area, it is
also less than a
federal state and
must remain so'

ping and the use of health and safety rules to introduce "back-door" measures like the 48-hour working time directive.

The source said that if Labour won the election, it could be expected to sell the pass on qualified majority voting and the social chapter, but Mr Major would resist any such proposals.

As any new treaty would require unanimity, and Mr Major would withhold his approval from anything that further entrenched political integration, there would be no new treaty until he was satisfied on all fronts.

Mr Rifkind told the House last night: "The Opposition, through their inexperience and naivety, have become a menace to Britain."

They are weakening Britain's position ... by encouraging other governments to wait until after our general election in the hope that some of their crucial negotiating objectives will then fall into their lap."

Labour under fire over Police Bill

Patricia Wynn Davies

Legal Affairs Editor

The new leader of the 9,000 barristers in England and Wales launched a stinging attack last night on the Labour Party for failing to oppose the Government's "law and order" programme.

Robert Owen QC, who takes over as chairman of the Bar on 1 January, said in his inaugural speech that the opposition had "failed lamentably" to promote a proper debate over the proposals for mandatory sentences and new police powers to conduct bugging and covert searches without warrants.

"The Police Bill now before Parliament raises constitutional issues of extraordinary importance," Mr Owen said. "It will permit the police covertly

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Top names line up in Chelsea for Scott's seat

FRAN ABRAMS
Political Correspondent

High-profile contenders were lining up last night for the seat of the deposed former minister Sir Nicholas Scott.

But as senior officials in his Kensington and Chelsea seat met to begin choosing a replacement, some whose names had been mentioned were ruling themselves out.

Among those who have confirmed that they are interested in replacing Sir Nicholas are the former defence minister Alan Clark and MP Terry Dicks.

Other MPs who are expected to take part in the contest for one of the Conservatives' safest seats are the Northern Ireland minister Sir John Wheeler and the Shoreham MP Michael Stephen, both of whose seats have been affected by boundary changes.

Two other names were being mentioned last night as possible contenders. They were Martin Howe, Euro-sceptic nephew of the former foreign secretary Sir Geoffrey, and Joan Hanham, leader of Kensington and Chelsea borough council.

Last week the association refused to endorse Sir Nicholas's continued candidacy after he was found face-down on a pavement after a drinks party at this year's Conservative

conference in Bournemouth. It is moving quickly to replace him, with a closing date for applications on 3 January.

More outlandish suggestions on the future of the seat include speculation that it was being "kept warm" by Sir Nicholas for Chris Patten, who will return from his post as governor of Hong Kong next year. An alternative version suggests that the party might support Joan Hanham on condition that she steps down after one term to make way for Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland, who is expected to lose his seat at the general election.

Among those who were thought less likely to stand was Harley Booth, MP who succeeded Margaret Thatcher in Finchley and who lost his junior ministerial post after a liaison with a researcher.

One friend of Mr Booth said last night that although his seat had also been hit by boundary changes, he would be more likely to seek a new one outside London because the media in the capital would be more likely to keep raking up his past.

Andrew Dalton, chairman of the Kensington and Chelsea party, had also been mentioned as a strong contender for the post. Last night he said he had been pressed hard to stand by both officials and members of



Hot seat: Names in the frame for the Kensington constituency include (clockwise from top): Alan Clark, Terry Dicks and Sir John Wheeler; even Chris Patten (left) has been mentioned

Benefit audit fails because of fraud

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Westminster Correspondent

Widespread fraud together with wrongly calculated payments and overspending led Sir John Bourn, the comptroller and auditor general, to refuse to ratify the accounts of welfare payments for the eighth year running.

In a report issued by the National Audit Office (NAO), Sir John qualified his audit opinion on the Benefits Agency 1995/6 accounts because it had spent more than was approved by Parliament, there was "material error" in income support and family credit awards, and spending was "materially affected" by fraud.

Overspending in 1995/6 amounted to £184.7m, compared with £139.7m in 1994/5, the fourth successive overspend. While Sir John accepts that estimating the agency's overall spend, which amounted to £34.384m, is difficult, the repeated failure of the agency to estimate accurately its future expenditure shows that its forecasting techniques are flawed.

The NAO found errors led to income support overpayments of an estimated £485.4m and underpayments of £167.5m, a total of 3.8 per cent of the £17bn spent on the benefit.

This was considerably better than last year's performance, when 5.1 per cent of the total involved wrong calculations. It

also found that family credit payments, on which £1.7bn is spent, had a higher rate of inaccuracy.

Research revealed

that 10.6 per cent of family credit awards contained an error, which suggests that there are £29.8m of overpayments (1.7 per cent) and underpayments of £11.6m (0.7 per cent).

The NAO report acknowledges that efforts being made by the agency to tackle fraud have improved, and found that in 1995/6, the agency received a payback of more than £5 for every £1 invested in anti-fraud measures.

The national "Beat a Cheat" campaign – a hotline for members of the public to report benefit fraudsters – resulted in more than 50,000 calls in the first six weeks of its operation. Other measures being undertaken include an increase in home visits to claimants, and more cross-checking of information.

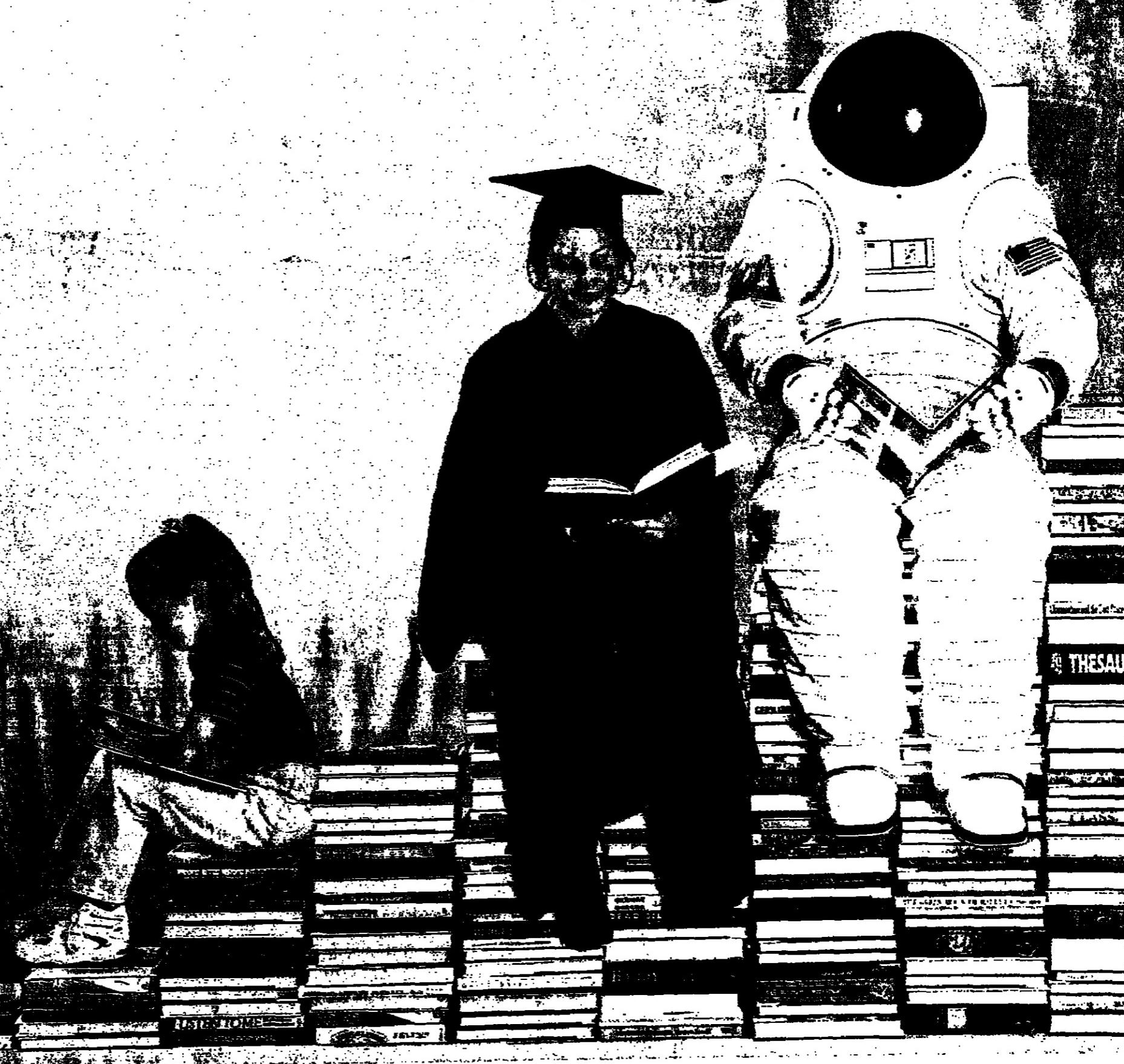
Sir John also says that the Benefits Agency needs to take action to ensure that losses are reported to Parliament promptly. At the end of March 1996, 290,000 potential overpayment cases were awaiting investigation to determine whether the amounts should be recovered or written off.

■ *Appropriation Accounts 1995-6 – Class XIII, Vote 1: Central government administered social security benefits and other payments.* NAO.



In the flesh: Agriculture minister Tony Baldry visiting Smithfield market in London yesterday as it emerged that an announcement was 'imminent' on a move by his boss Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture, to get the go-ahead at a meeting of European ministers on Monday for a selective cull of up to 100,000 cattle. It could lead to an early lifting of the export ban on beef for Northern Ireland. Photograph: Andrew Biuuman

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news

Where sheep may safely graze. (But at everyone else's cost)

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

Conservationists have called on the Government to clamp down on the overgrazing by sheep which is damaging wildlife across swaths of Britain's uplands.

The heather, the most characteristic plant of our treeless high hills and mountains, the mountain hare, ground-nesting birds like the golden plover and the hen harrier are among those species suffering from high densities of sheep.

"They are literally nibbling away the wildlife value of the uplands and leaving farmers with a long-term problem," said David Bellamy, president of the nation's network of wildlife trusts.

"Hills and moors that used to be a blaze of purple heather in

late August are now a uniform green colour - much like a suburban lawn. They are just a shadow of their former glory."

A report from the trusts, *Crisis in the Hills*, points out that the number of sheep in the UK has risen by more than a third in the last 20 years to 44 million - which means four sheep for every five human inhabitants. Wales, northern England and parts of Greece have the highest stocking densities for sheep in the European Union.

It cites government research which shows at least half of the country's moorland heather is in a poor suppressed condition, liable to further destruction and damage by sheep grazing.

There are about 60,000 farmers working the uplands. They mostly earn far less than their lowland, crop-growing counterparts but they have the bulk of Britain's grazing animals.



Under threat: The number of sheep in Britain has risen sharply over the last 20 years and the increase in grazing is destroying wildlife habitats

Photograph: Howard Barlow

keep. This amounts to about £30 per annum for each breeding ewe; the subsidies totalled £655m last year.

This payment per head has encouraged the overstocking.

While the more fragile upland habitats can tolerate fewer than two ewes per hectare without deterioration, in some areas there are more than seven.

Over the years more and

more sheep have been spending the entire year on the hills, rather than only the summers, with farmers giving them supplementary feed through the long winters. This has sharply

exacerbated the grazing and erosion damage.

In 1994, the subsidies were reformed with incentives to encourage lower stocking densities, but the wildlife trusts - which have 260,000 supporters and 2,000 nature reserves between them - say the changes did not go nearly far enough.

The report calls for several

further changes - the most

fundamental of which is to

scrap subsidies based on the

number of animals and replace

them with payments based

only on the area of land a

farmer manages.

A spokesman for the Ministry

of Agriculture said: "We are trying to strike a balance between environmental issues and maintaining viable farming, and this balance has shifted towards the environment."

Voluntary premium payments were available for farmers who reduced the density of sheep in sensitive areas. Furthermore, the Government had powers to withdraw subsidies when areas became severely overgrazed and it had occasionally threatened to use them.

"But we prefer to work on a voluntary, goodwill basis when there is a problem," the spokesman added.

Legal threat in college pay protest

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

Students on teacher-training courses could be able to sue their universities if a planned boycott of inspections by lecturing unions means departments lose accreditation.

Union members in university education departments agreed yesterday to continue their disruption of inspections in protest over pay, which has already affected at least three teacher-training institutions.

The Association of University Teachers (AUT), whose members voted for the action in October, also acknowledged the boycott could ultimately leave the door open for trainee teachers to take legal action against their departments.

Ofted, the schools watchdog which also inspects university education departments and teacher-training colleges on behalf of the Teacher Training Agency, would be unable to rely back on its findings to their students.

The TTA might then decide to hold back funding from these departments and, possibly, also withdraw accreditation. Students who applied to an institution, only to find its accreditation withdrawn during their course, might have grounds to sue.

The decision to continue blocking inspections puts the education departments in direct confrontation with Ofted, which yesterday reinforced its bullish line on the stand-off.

A spokesman said: "We have a duty to inspect teacher-training colleges wherever we can. We cannot guarantee to reschedule inspections and thus we might not be able to give the reports to the Teacher Training Agency that it needs for its work."

The TTA passed responsibility back to Ofted, saying the agency had a legal responsibility to go into departments and secure information. However, it

stressed that withdrawal of accreditation happened only as a last resort at the end of a long process.

Tom Wilson, AUT assistant general secretary, said it was "most unlikely that any meaningful form of inspection would now take place".

The possibility of legal action by students might come "some way down the line", he said, though any attempt by the TTA to withdraw accreditation would be strongly resisted by the union. Students on this year's courses would not be affected.

The AUT is due to meet with employers today together with the conciliation service Acas in an attempt to resolve the dispute.

However, it is already preparing

The union is already preparing to ballot members on taking further action

ing to ballot members on taking further action in the pay campaign, including disrupting university admissions and examinations next year.

An admissions boycott would affect around 250,000 school-leavers hoping to enter higher education next autumn.

The university pay dispute involves a cross-section of staff from porters to professors. White-collar staff, including academics, administrators and technicians, have been offered a 1.5 per cent pay rise, while manual workers have been offered 2.5 per cent.

The dispute prompted a 24-hour strike last month by around 100,000 employees last month, bringing British universities almost to a standstill.

How you can help victims of child abuse

Paul Cooper

Child abuse is a serious issue that affects children and adults. It is important to take steps to prevent it from happening again. Here are some ways you can help:

1. Support local organisations that work with victims of child abuse.

2. Educate yourself about child abuse and how to prevent it.

3. Report any suspected cases of child abuse to the police or social services.

4. Encourage your community to take action against child abuse.

5. Spread the word about the importance of preventing child abuse.

6. Support the work of organisations that help victims of child abuse.

7. Encourage your employer to support the work of organisations that help victims of child abuse.

8. Encourage your local government to support the work of organisations that help victims of child abuse.

9. Encourage your local church to support the work of organisations that help victims of child abuse.

10. Encourage your local school to support the work of organisations that help victims of child abuse.

11. Encourage your local library to support the work of organisations that help victims of child abuse.

12. Encourage your local supermarket to support the work of organisations that help victims of child abuse.

13. Encourage your local post office to support the work of organisations that help victims of child abuse.

14. Encourage your local gas company to support the work of organisations that help victims of child abuse.

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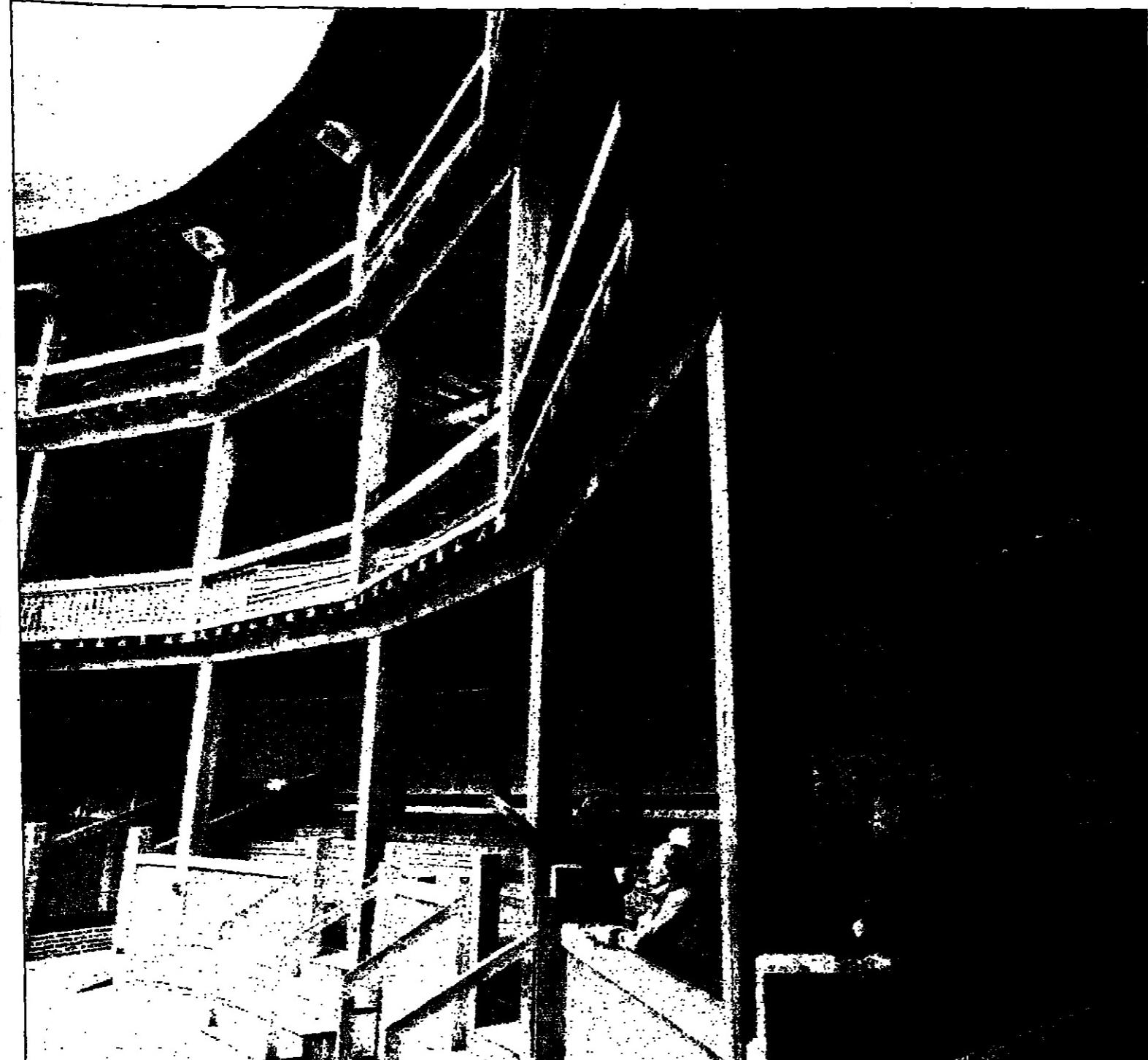
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80. Encourage your local town

Theatre voted top attraction for tourists, vindicating one man's dream



Global vision: Already, more than 300,000 tourists have visited the South Bank venue

Photograph: Edward Sykes

Shakespeare's Globe becomes a stage for all the world

David Lister
Arts News Editor

The Globe Theatre in London, which will have its first full season next year, has been voted the top tourist attraction in Europe more than 40 years after the idea was first mooted to re-create an Elizabethan theatre near the site of Shake-

ciations of Tourism Journalists, an umbrella organisation representing travel writers in eight countries.

Yesterday the actor Julian Glover, a member of the Globe's artistic directorate, accepted the Golden Star Award at a ceremony at the theatre.

The judging panel picked the Globe because it was an at- now stands at 500 a day. Sandra Moretto, tour manager at the Globe, said:

theatre near the site of Shakespeare's original Globe.

It will also be seen as a tribute to the persistence of the late Sam Wanamaker, the American actor who fought for years to build the theatre. Wanamaker arrived in London in the Fifties and was appalled to discover there was no fitting memorial to Shakespeare in the city.

Shakespeare's theatre. He fought against indifference and at times hostility to rebuild the venue near its original site, and launched several fund-raising campaigns. Although he died in 1993, he saw work

The accolade comes from the

Projects voted on for these international tourism awards have to have a strong international appeal. More than 300,000 visitors have come to sold-out performances during our 1996 prologue season, to the exhibitions, and as students of all ages to attend workshops at our education centre."

- presence and be a major tourist years ago.

How we

flow v.

How j **victim**

than 100 children in Clwyd were highlighted in this newspaper and was the launch-pad for a campaign which eventually won government action to tighten standards in children's homes.

Our Christmas appeal is in support of projects run by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children including its helpline, direct support to help children who have been abused and to help

have been abused, and to help prevent future abuse.

Countless children's stories in the community or residential care have never been heard. The NSPCC, Britain's leading charity specialising in child protection and prevention of cruelty runs over 120 projects throughout England and Wales and Northern Ireland offering counselling and therapy to abused children as well as carrying out its own investigations into allegations of child abuse.

The charity relies on public donations for 85 per cent of its income.

We would like you to contribute between now and Christmas. Your money will go to help projects such as the NSPCC's freephone helpline which takes on average 1,300 a week, the London Investigation Team which works with police and social services to investigate paedophiles and the Kaleidoscope project in Newcastle which treats children who have abused other children.

**THE INDEPENDENT/NSPCC
Victims of Abuse Appeal**

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Address
Phone No.
Amount of donation

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DUBLIN SUMMIT

Europe's hard core takes solid form

In Dublin's fair city...or the rocky road to Dublin?

European Union leaders assembling in Dublin today for a two-day summit have a splendid tradition to maintain. Love it, or hate it, much of the recent history of the EU has been shaped by summits in Dublin. It was in Dublin in 1979 that Margaret Thatcher refused "half a loaf" and set the scene for the row with other European governments over "my money" which dominated the early 1980s. It was at Dublin in 1984 that commitments were given – by Mrs Thatcher, among others – that led to the 1992 Single Market campaign and the Single European Act, which consumed Euro-politics for five years. The Dublin summit of 1990 was dominated by the Franco-German ideas for monetary and political union, which led directly to the Maastricht Treaty, EMU and a thousand Euro-sceptic tirades.

And Dublin, December 1996? In one sense, this is just a wait-and-see summit. Wait and see who wins the British election next year. Wait and

see what emerges from the negotiations on EU treaty reform which will not end before next summer, at the earliest. Wait and see which countries qualify and sign up for economic and monetary union at the start of the following year (when the playful sense of humour of EU timetable senders sends the early 1998 summit to London)?

But Dublin 1996, today and tomorrow, may prove to be just as memorable as its predecessors.

It may well be the occasion when the shadowy concept of a "core Europe" – an inner group of states, ready to push ahead of the others – will be given flesh and bone. It may ensure the year 2001 as the new 1992: the target date for the EU to deliver its 40-year-old promise of complete freedom of movement for its people (not just their goods and services) within a common border. And since the British, in the shape of Messrs Major and Rifkind, are likely to sit (metaphorically) in the corner while both these ideas are agreed in principle, Dublin

**John Lichfield,
Chief Foreign
Writer, argues
that this may be
a meeting that
marks a historic
change in the
European Union**

could mark the beginning of a process of marginalisation of the UK which may, or may not, be interrupted by the result of the general election.

EU finance ministers were meeting in Dublin yesterday to try to resolve the differences between Paris and Bonn over who will run economic policy in the "euro zone" after the single currency – the euro – becomes a reality in 1999. This is not



In a corner: John Major and Malcolm Rifkind, Dublin outsiders

just a technical dispute. It reaches to the heart of the way Germany and France have run their economies and the way the euro will be managed.

Germany wants the management of the currency left mostly to the technocrats of the new European central bank in Frankfurt. France wants the bank to be shadowed by a political organisation – a stability council – which would set many of the parameters for management of the

group of EU states which will pre-digest many aspects of EU and economic policy among themselves, pushing Britain and others to the margins.

Originally the Dublin summit was also supposed to be an important staging-post in the process of EU institutional reform – the inter-governmental conference – launched earlier this year. By general agreement, serious discussion of many of the most bitterly contested issues, particularly the national veto and the voting power of larger countries, will be delayed until after the UK election. But the French and Germans are seeking preliminary discussion of another of the potential building blocks of "core Europe": the idea that the core should be changed to allow groups of like-minded countries to go ahead with new, common European policies, even if another member state objects. Britain insists any individual state should be able to block a new policy, even if it does not have to take part in it. France

and Germany say unwilling states should be able to stand aside but not block the others.

What kind of new policies? The most obvious candidate would be the proposals to be tabled by the Irish government today for rapid progress in the demolition of internal EU barriers to the movement of individuals. Dublin suggests this should be completed by 2001, making it just as easy to travel, or move home, from, say, Antwerp to Naples, as within one country. To make this possible, new common policies, under formal EU law, are suggested for immigration, asylum-seekers, visas, and the fight against organised crime, drugs and terrorism.

Britain begs to differ, arguing that control of national borders is one of the fundamental prerogatives and badges of office, of a sovereign state. Dublin is an awkward place for Her Majesty's Government to have to make this argument. Why has sovereign Britain never felt the need for a systematically policed border with Ireland?

Major prepares for final conflict

THE SHOWDOWN

Sarah Helm
Dublin

As John Major headed to Dublin for probably his last showdown at a European summit, Tony Blair, the Labour leader, was already in Dublin forging European ties and preparing to take his seat on the European stage.

Mr Major is today expected to clash with his European partners during discussions on a draft treaty on European reform. He is expected to oppose a series of possible changes to the treaty, including suggestions that border controls should be dropped and qualified majority voting increased.

The Prime Minister will also come under new pressure in Dublin over the single currency. Finance ministers, including Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, seemed last night to be on the verge of reaching a deal on a stability pact, which sets out rules and fines for governing the euro-zone.

Today the design of the euro bank notes will be unveiled in Dublin by the European Monetary Institute, the European central bank in waiting. The decision to present the notes at the summit is intended to boost the single currency project and to capture the imagination of the public.

While clashes between Mr Major and other leaders seem inevitable, Britain's partners know it is more likely to be Mr Blair than Mr Major who will decide whether to take Britain into the single currency and who will be signing the new EU reform treaty on behalf of Britain.

The treaty signature is due to take place at the Amsterdam summit in June, after the general election. The decision on whether to join the first wave of EMU must be taken by early 1998.

In the first real sign that Mr Blair is launching shadow negotiations with Britain's European partners ahead of a British election, the Labour leader flew to Dublin to attend a pre-summit meeting of Socialist leaders. It is the first time Mr Blair has attended such a gathering since he became Labour leader.

Mr Blair also held talks last night with Wim Kok, Prime Minister of the Netherlands. Mr Kok will become a key figure in the treaty reform negotiations when the Netherlands takes over the EU presidency in January. He is believed to have proved Mr Blair on Labour's position on further integration. European leaders have deliberately jugged the most controversial areas of reform – such as a reduction in the national veto – because they know Mr Major would say "no" ahead of the election.

Determined not to be seen to be giving in to European demands, thereby playing into Conservative hands, Mr Blair was expected last night to reaffirm that Labour would, like Mr Major, oppose the most integrationist plans. However, Labour would demonstrate a positive approach to EU membership and accept a moderate increase in qualified majority voting. The party also intends to accept the social chapter.



Flickering hopes: Chancellor Kohl looks for some Christmas cheer at a cabinet meeting in Bonn as he faces up to an uncertain political future. Photograph: AP

Going to war against drugs and thugs

Sarah Helm

Sudden promises of a "war on drugs" and a "crackdown on crime" are usually a sign that politicians are failing to achieve their prime objectives and seek easy popular support.

European heads of government meeting tomorrow in Dublin will promise to fight "drugs and thugs" and will offer a crackdown on illegal immigrants as well. The new draft agreement, which updates the Maastricht treaty, even offers a crime-free wonderland of "freedom, justice and security". It wants all internal border checks to be abolished by 2001.

For all the ambitious proposals on the criminal justice, however, the draft treaty suggests indecision about what direction Europe

should take as the final lap in negotiations begins, concluding at the Amsterdam summit next June.

When talks on the inter-governmental conference (IGC) to rewrite the treaty began in Turin last March, pledges were made to bring about "far-reaching change,

to redesign Brussels policy-making in readiness for the entry of new member states from the east.

Since Turin, however, it has become increasingly apparent that ambitions would have to be curtailed. Public opinion in many member states appears unwilling to accept radical reform just three years after the Maastricht treaty.

The Franco-German motor, which drives integration forward, has faltered. And Britain's partners realise

that John Major would veto any ambitious plans. They accept that final decisions cannot be made until after the British general election, which must be held by May.

As a result, the draft treaty hedges almost every proposal with "square brackets", "ifs and buts" and "alternative ideas". From the current proposals there is little cause to believe the European Union will be anything like ready to accept Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic – never mind other would-be east European members – until well into the next century.

Predictably, the treaty contains several suggestions which isolate Britain. It wants the social chapter brought inside the treaty, and the EU to have new powers to di-

rect policy on employment to further job creation. The plans for abolishing immigration controls, harmonising criminal justice legislation and setting up joint police teams are also anathema to Britain. But Mr Major is not the only head of government who has said "no" to the more integrationist proposals.

Despite attempts by the drafters from the Irish presidency to give a lead, and efforts to increase momentum by the president to improve the draft, the draft says:

"The Irish presidency states that it remains essential to make significant progress on further use of qualified majority voting" in order to ensure that the union does not

become "paralysed" after enlargement in the 21st century. But the draft states that the issue is "highly sensitive" and will have to be decided at a "later stage".

"Flexibility", or "enhanced cooperation", as the French put it, would allow groups of states to pool powers where they choose, while others opt out. These proposals are also "too complex and sensitive" for member states to agree on now, the draft says.

Even the detailed proposals on crime fighting and drugs are uncertain. For all the proclamations about pooling powers, member states have done little to take joint action in these fields.

As the next months will show, it is not only Britain which jealously guards its power over affairs of justice and policing.

Kohl aims to appease Germans over euro

THE FEARS

Imre Karacs
Bonn

Realpolitik has taken a toll on German ambitions. As Chancellor Helmut Kohl goes to Dublin vowing to do his best for his country, the federalist vision for Europe is in danger of being eclipsed by a war of attrition over percentages.

There is little debate in Bonn over Europe, but Mr Kohl is aware that out there in the streets, the cherished goal of monetary union elicits only fear and loathing among his once unquestioning electorate. His task in Dublin, above all else, is to extract a deal that will reassure Germans that the new currency will be as solid as the mighty Deutschmark.

A poll published earlier this week showed mistrust of the euro is rising, with 61 per cent of Germans professing "fear" of monetary union, and only 16 per cent sounding optimistic. Just over a quarter of those polled supported the enterprise that enjoys almost unanimous backing by the political élite and big business.

The fear also reflects something tangible: the realisation that the new currency is on the way, probably arriving early in 1999 as planned. The only question for most Germans is: what will it be like?

"I am confident we will find a solution that will demonstrate to all citizens the European Union's determination to create a euro with long-term stability," Mr Kohl pledged at yesterday's Europe debate at the Bundestag. Unless the Chancellor delivers on this promise, his own political future will be imperilled at elections scheduled on the eve of monetary union.

Germany's leader will thus come to the Dublin summit in rather the same manner as his British counterparts have approached these occasions in years past: weighed down by domestic baggage. For electoral reasons, he must play tough. To save his skin, he will have to drive a hard bargain over matters deemed important by the voters, and in exchange sacrifice causes in which he passionately believes.

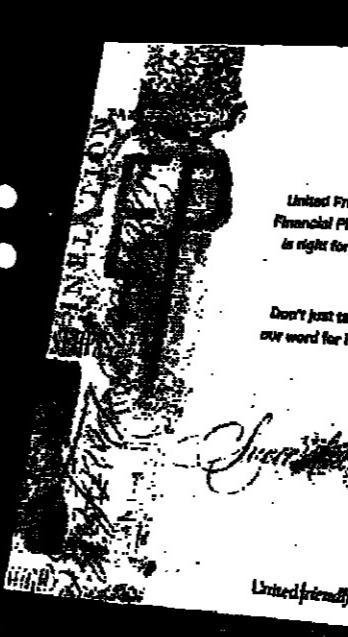
Egged on by the Bundesbank, Mr Kohl's main goal in Dublin is the "stability pact", an agreement signed by all EU member states to abide by rules dreamt up in Frankfurt. Governments participating in monetary union would be fined under the "stability pact" if they did not keep budget deficits within strict limits.

The Germans see the new European central bank in the role of both judge and jury, an arrangement that would go some way towards liberating elected national governments from the tedious chores of monetary policy. It has worked in Germany, they say, but their awkward allies in Europe – notably France – fail to appreciate the efficiency of the arrangement.

Mr Kohl seems determined to push the summit to the brink to obtain the precious piece of paper that he can then wave to his voters, but expects to yield on all other points of the agenda.

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Riot police end march on Milosevic's home

Tony Barber
Europe Editor

Serbia's neo-Communist authorities deployed riot police in Belgrade yesterday to prevent thousands of student demonstrators from marching towards the home of President Slobodan Milosevic. In a tense confrontation, riot police blocked a busy street near the US embassy and forced the students to abandon their hope of marching outside Mr Milosevic's home in Dedinje.

The students' march coincided with a trip to Belgrade by Italy's Foreign Minister, Lamberto Dini. He was the most senior Western politician to visit Serbia since huge anti-government demonstrations broke out almost four weeks ago in protest at alleged election-rigging by the Socialist authorities.

Mr Dini held separate meetings with Mr Milosevic and opposition leaders, and said afterwards that both sides had "left a margin for discussion".

The immediate cause of the trouble is the Socialists' refusal

to recognise local election victories for the opposition in Belgrade and other large cities last month. The opposition Zajedno (Together) coalition movement would also like to see Mr Milosevic removed from power, but has sworn to stick to peaceful methods in pursuit of this goal.

Mr Dini said the opposition was being unrealistic in continuing to demand official recognition of the 17 November polls which would have deprived the Socialists of power in Belgrade for the first time since 1945. "Reinstatement of the results seems to me to be something that is not on the cards, the basis for dialogue between the parties. They must find a formula around the impasse," he said.

His remarks drew an instant rebuff from one of Zajedno's three main leaders, Vuk Draskovic, who said recognition of the opposition's election victories was a precondition of dialogue with Mr Milosevic. Other opposition leaders hinted at a deal involving fresh polls staged under international supervision.

The state media also would be required to abandon their strong pro-government bias.

Such conditions may not appeal to Mr Milosevic, who tightly controls the media. As an example of the kind of propaganda being fed to the Serbian public, a new tabloid weekly called *Flash* carried a banner headline in its first edition saying: "The CIA is carrying out its plan: the Albanian mafia is funding the demonstrations."

Mr Milosevic has given no signal that he is willing to hold new local elections or make substantial concessions to the opposition. He has said nothing in public that would suggest he even thinks he has a problem.

Pristina (AP) - The party representing ethnic Albanians in Serbia's Kosovo province said one of its activists died after being tortured by Serbian police. Feriz Blakoci, 34, died two days ago at a hospital. The Democratic League of Kosovo said his body bore signs of torture and he was the 14th Albanian victim of Serb repression this year.



Thumbnail picture: Eleutherodactylus, a newly classified species of frog, just 10mm long, on a Cuban coin the size of a £1 piece. The frog was first found on Monte Iberia, eastern Cuba, in 1993.
Photograph: M. Lammerink/AP

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Second patient turns to Dr Death

But Australia's MPs seek to cancel law allowing euthanasia

Robert Mills
Sydney

Janet Mills, a 52-year-old with terminal cancer, announced yesterday that she would be the second person to try to kill herself under the Northern Territory's voluntary euthanasia law. But a political storm is threatening to stifle the controversial law after the Australian parliament voted to overturn it this week.

Mrs Mills, from South Australia, held a press conference in Darwin yesterday attended by Philip Nitschke, the man known as "Doctor Death" after inventing a computerised machine that allows a terminally ill person to choose their moment of death by pressing a button that induces a lethal injection.

The first person to use the "death machine" successfully last September under the Northern Territory's law, the world's first allowing voluntary euthanasia for terminally ill people, was Robert Dent, a father with incurable cancer. Speaking at the Dent family home in Darwin yesterday, with his husband at her side, Mrs Mills announced that she wanted to be the second. She is suffering from a form of cancer similar to that which killed Paul Eddington, the actor.

Mrs Mills has been supported by a doctor and a psychiatrist outside the Northern Territory, who have confirmed that her disease has no cure and that she was not suffering from clinical depression when she asked for her life to be terminated. But she lacks a third crucial requirement under the law, the signature of a territory specialist doctor on her written request to die.

"I appeal to a territory doctor to meet me and simply agree with my specialist oncologist in South Australia that I am dying," she said. "I now have a few weeks left to live. I am asking and begging for this."

But her request may not be needed. The Northern Territory's Rights of the Terminally Ill Act has caused a nationwide furor since it came into force in July. The territory's own doctors, conservative at the best of times, have steered clear of it, isolating Dr Nitschke from their ranks. A chorus of disapproval has reverberated across Australia, from the Australian Medical Association, church leaders and the mainstream press who have branded the law as morally capricious and the Northern Territory as immune for bringing it into existence.

And now, the biggest threat to the law's future has come from Canberra, where MPs in the House of Representatives, the lower house in the federal parliament, voted by 88 votes to 35 in the early hours of Tuesday to overturn it, after a long and emotional debate. They did so by passing on a conscience vote, the Euthanasia Laws Bill,

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Netanyahu pledges to build in revenge

Patrick Cockburn
Beit El

In the cemetery of the settlement of Beit El a small red mechanical grab was digging graves for Eeta Tzur and her 12-year-old son Ephraim, shot in their car by Palestinians on a by-pass two miles away.

Thousands of Israeli settlers from across the West Bank who yesterday poured into Beit El, a sprawling red-roofed settlement outside the autonomous Palestinian town of Ramallah, were told by Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, that they were "pioneers" and "heroes" of our time. He promised Beit El would never be uprooted.

Yoel Tzur, whose wife was killed and was himself wounded along with four of his other children in the attack, denounced the Oslo accords to mourners, describing Yasser

Arafat, the PLO leader, as "a corrupt villain". Pointing to terraced hills which form an amphitheatre around the Beit El cemetery, he said that for every such attack "a thousand new houses should be built on them".

A sign of the heightened tension between Israelis and Palestinians came yesterday when an Israeli shot and killed a Palestinian worker he suspected was trying to break into his house. Police said Samir Abu Shafiq, 40, from Gaza, who worked in the village of Kochav Michael, was killed and four other Palestinians wounded.

The killing of Eeta and Ephraim Tzur by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) was carried out on the 28th anniversary of

the founding of the organisation, whose leadership is based in Damascus. The once-powerful radical organisation is split into factions, but Israel says the PFLP carried out similar drive-by shootings six months ago.

The gunmen fled into Ramallah, where their burned-out car was found on a rubbish dump. Israeli officers, including Uzi Dayan, the commander of Israeli forces in the West Bank, were escorted by Palestinian Authority police into Ramallah, to look at the wreck.

Israeli troops had completely sealed off Ramallah yesterday and were turning back all cars. Mr Netanyahu said the killings and the flight of the PFLP gunmen into Ramallah was a "test-case" for Mr Arafat.



Taking the blame: Masked members of the PFLP, the organisation thought responsible for the murders, prepare for a demonstration at Bethlehem university to mark the group's 29th anniversary.

Photograph: AP

'Monster of Florence' set for retrial



Murder suspect: Pacciani (right) and his lawyer, Rosario Bevacqua at the appeal hearing in the spring

Andrew Gumbel
Rome

Pietro Pacciani, the Tuscan peasant who was convicted two years ago of being the serial killer the "Monster of Florence" but then acquitted on appeal, was ordered to stand trial all over again last night as the Italian high court ruled that the decision to release him had been ill-considered and illogical.

One of Italy's most notorious postwar murder cases was thereby brought back to square one, to the acute embarrassment of the judicial authorities in Florence which has spent the past 28 years trying unsuccessfully to crack it.

Pacciani, a notorious Peeping Tom once jailed for sexually abusing his own daughter, is only the latest in a long line of suspects believed down the years to have been responsible for murdering amorous couples camping out in the countryside around the Tuscan capital.

At the time of his original trial in 1994, much of the evidence which was presented against him was considered by legal experts to be circumstantial, and the conviction was much criticised both in Italy and abroad.

By the time the appeal hearing rolled around in March this year, even the prosecution was pushing for his release after admitting their case against him didn't hold water. But then, in an extraordinary courtroom scene on the morning that the

appeals verdict was due, dramatic new evidence came to light pinning Pacciani four-square to the most recent of the murders.

Prosecutors begged for more time, saying they had eyewitness testimony linking Pacciani and an accomplice to the murder of two French tourists outside the hamlet of San Casciano in 1985. However, the judge turned down the request and set the sexagenarian peasant free.

Last night's decision to put Pacciani back on trial was greeted with delight by the Florence prosecutor's office.

"It seemed unreasonable to me that all the new material collected should fail to be examined by a court," said the city's chief prosecutor, Pier Luigi Vigna, who has been personally involved with the case since the first of the eight double murders in 1968.

Pacciani, who at his original trial compared himself to Christ suffering on the cross, was said by his defence lawyers to have barricaded himself in his house last night and was refusing to answer the telephone. "They're persecuting me all over again," he was quoted as saying. A date for the new trial has yet to be set.

Rome (AP) — A key witness in the state's case against Giulio Andreotti told a hushed courtroom that the Mafia's "boss of bosses" Baldassare Di Maggio, once bestowed a kiss of respect on the former Italian premier. Mr Andreotti has been on trial, accused of aiding the Mafia, since September 1995.

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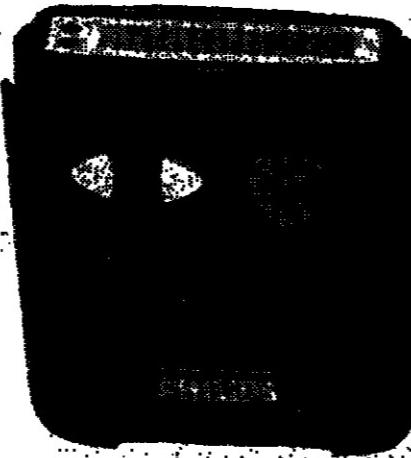
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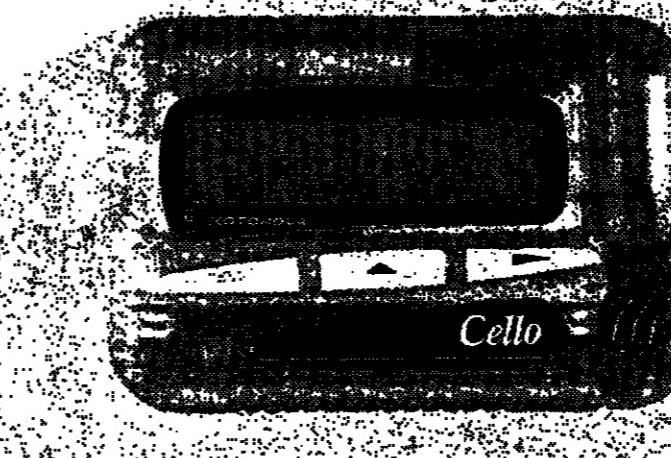
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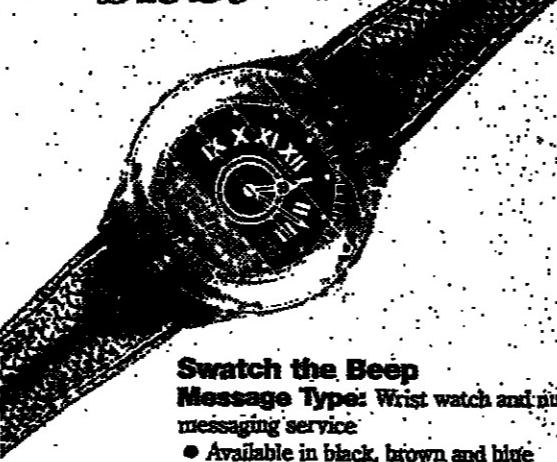
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international

Hong Kong handover: Direction of new administration is uncertain, but Reuters news agency is moving out of colony

Tung happy to toe Peking line

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

One day after being chosen as the head of Hong Kong's first post-colonial government, Tung Chee-hwa, the 59-year-old shipping magnate, has sent mixed signals about the type of administration he intends to run.

On the one hand he clearly indicated that he fully supported China's hardline policies, which include the scrapping of all elected tiers of government. On the other, he said that he looked forward to meetings with the Democratic Party and other critics of the Chinese government, who Chinese officials have refused to meet. He also made it clear that he was not planning a major reshuffle of the top ranks of the civil service.

Mr Tung was speaking yesterday in the Chinese border town of Shenzhen where he was attending a meeting of the Preparatory Committee, the body making preparations for China's resumption of power in Hong Kong on 1 July. He will go to Peking next week to be formally appointed Chief Executive

of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

China is hailing Mr Tung's selection as the "beginning of Hong Kong's true democracy", according to the official *China Daily* newspaper, which appeared yesterday. "It is China's resumption of the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong", the commentary said, "which offers Hong Kong the unprecedented opportunity for its democratic development".

China is adamant that Mr Tung's selection by a 400-strong hand-picked committee of Hong Kong representatives gave the entire community an opportunity to participate in what is being described as an "election". This election produced three candidates, although the other two received about one-tenth of the votes given to Mr Tung who was picked by 320 of the committee's members.

The same committee reassembles on 21 December to choose the 60 people who will replace the members of the legislature elected last year. More than half the members of the current legislature are among the 130

people who will be considered to fill the new body. Many of the candidates who stood for pro-Peking parties and were defeated at the last election have put their names forward for selection.

Mr Tung said yesterday that the appointment of a provisional Legislative Council was for the good of Hong Kong and that he expected the current government to co-operate with its work.

The Governor, Chris Patten, has made it clear that this will not happen but he has promised to co-operate with Mr Tung on other matters. Meanwhile, the British government has invited Mr Tung to visit London for talks, but he tactfully said yesterday that he was too busy to think of travelling abroad for the time being.

The subtle business of lobbying for places in Mr Tung's cabinet, and for senior civil service jobs, is already underway. The new Chief Executive says that it will take him about a month to appoint a cabinet. He can expect to be given plenty of unsolicited advice as he goes about this task.



Facing the press: Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa in Shenzhen, south China, yesterday. Photograph: Reuters

Stars protest over bid to block film

Renee Schoof
Associated Press

Peking — Paul Newman, Bernardo Bertolucci, Barbra Streisand, Spike Lee and 38 other Hollywood celebrities have sent a letter to China's government criticizing it for trying to block a film about the Dalai Lama and other productions.

Chinese film officials recently made it clear to the Walt Disney Company they opposed plans to distribute *Kundun*, a new film about the Dalai Lama. China condemns the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, claiming that he is fomenting an independence movement.

China's objections were seen as a veiled threat that Peking would block Disney's plans to expand in the Chinese market if the company did not scrap the film. Last month, Disney said it would honour its agreement to distribute the film.

In a letter to the Chinese ambassador in Washington, 41 Hollywood celebrities condemned the Chinese government's efforts to dictate what kinds of film projects can be made in or about China. What China finds objectionable in *Kundun*, the letter said, is a portrayal of Tibet at odds with the official Chinese view. China often objects to outside criticism it sees as interference in its internal affairs.

The interference that concerns us, the letter said, "is your government's attempt to impose worldwide censorship on any artistic production that does not meet with official approval."

Government spokesman Shen Guofang said yesterday: "The Chinese government and Chinese officials have never put any kind of pressure on Disney. In China, there is no system of film censorship," Mr Shen added. "China produces many films every year without any censorship problems."

The letter listed a dozen recent moves by the Chinese government to ban films or prevent filmmakers from working. China prevented Stone from making a movie in China about Mao Ts'e-tung in 1993 and banned the Academy Award-winning Chinese film *Farewell, My Concubine* in 1994 until substantial cuts were made. China's efforts to restrict the film world's right of freedom of expression was "wholly unacceptable," it said.

The directors and actors said they wanted good relations with Chinese colleagues and the government, "but respect for freedom of expression must underpin those ties". The letter was released by Human Rights Watch-Asia.

Here is the news from Singapore

REUTERS

Reuters news agency has announced that it is shutting down its world news desk, picture and television operations in Hong Kong and moving them to Singapore next March.

The company denies that the closure has any connection with China's resumption of sovereignty over the British colony in less than seven months' time.

"If there was to be a concern about the handing over," said Phil Melchior, Reuters Managing Director East Asia, "it's not about people in the headquarters, it's about people on the front lines". He said the Hong Kong bureau would increase in size and that Reuters was continually trying to increase its editorial presence in China.

Staff in Hong Kong were surprised by the move, which Mr Melchior said had been under consideration since 1992 when Reuters purchased large premises in Singapore. One employee said: "It seems awfully funny to announce this a day after Tung Chee-hwa's election".

The company must have been aware of the situation in Hong Kong because Reuters Editor-in-Chief Mark Wood visited both the colony and China just three weeks ago and had talks with senior leaders in both places.

Other international news organisations contacted last night expressed surprise at Reuters' move and said they had no plans to move out of Hong Kong.

It is, however, believed that all the major companies have contingency plans for a move should the situation deteriorate in the territory.

Building Societies Act 1986.

Notice under paragraph 7 of schedule 17 to the Act.

Notice is hereby given that the Alliance & Leicester Building Society, Register No. 737B, whose principal office is at 49 Park Lane, London W1Y 4E0, desires to transfer its business to Alliance & Leicester plc, and that the Society has applied to the Building Societies Commission to confirm the transfer.

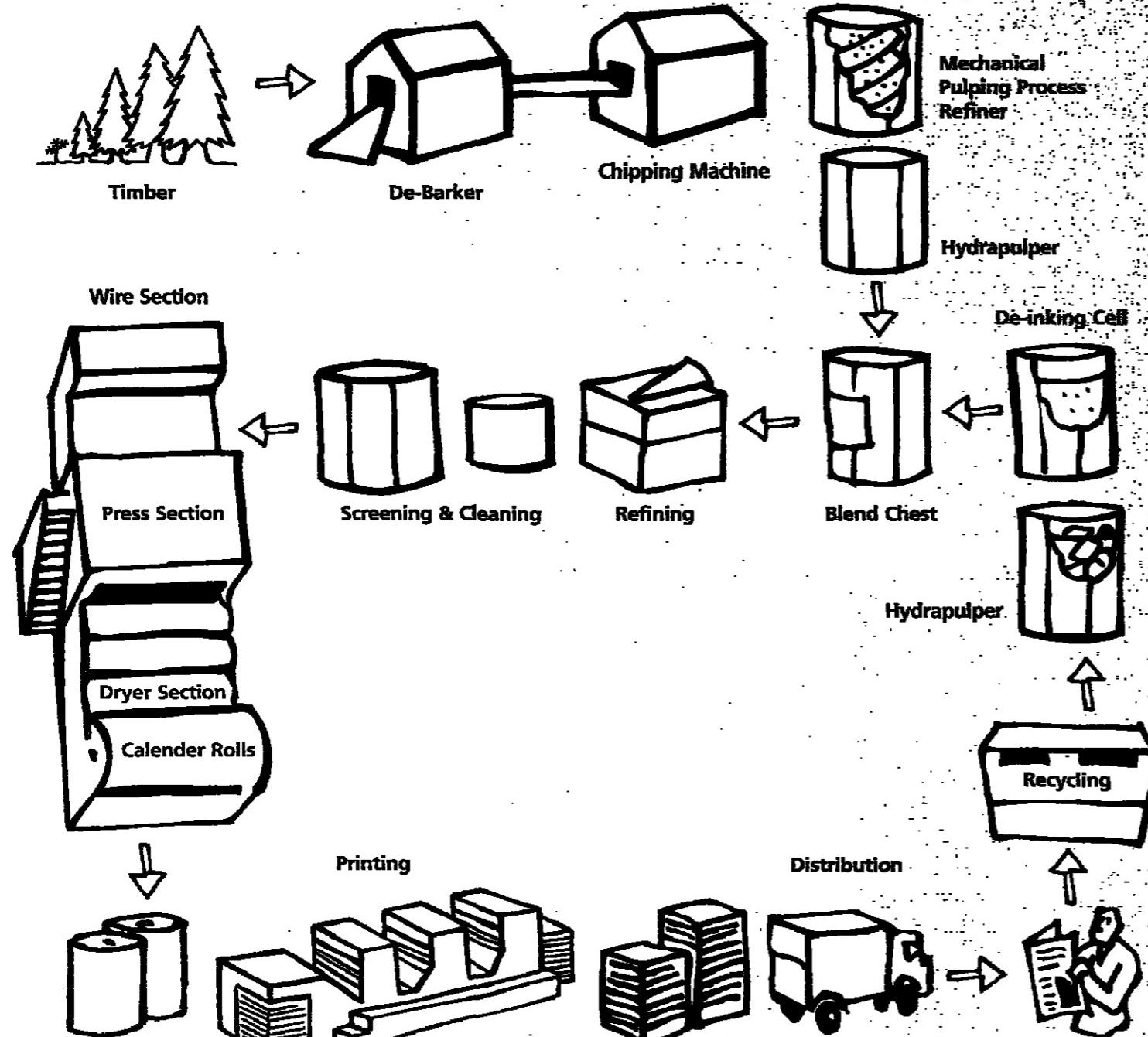
Any interested party may make written representation to the Commission and/or give notice of intention to make oral representations to the Commission with respect to the application.

Written representations and notices of intention to make oral representations should be received by the Commission at Victory House, 30-34 Kingsway, London WC2B 6ES, by no later than 13th January 1997.

Oral representations will be heard by the Commission on 10th February 1997 at a time and place to be determined by the Commission.

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obituaries / gazette



PRIVATE EYE



John Stamp

In the world where sheep come into contact with science, there has been no more famous name than that of John Stamp.

In the early 1960s, the hill farmers in my constituency of West Lothian suffered from a number of sheep diseases, resulting in perinatal and abortion troubles which threatened to stop their livelihood. It was natural that we should turn to Stamp, who in 1964 was given the George Hedley Award, the laureate medalion, of the Council of the National Sheep Breeders Association, "for outstanding services to the sheep industry".

William Martin, his successor as Director of the Moredun Institute of Animal Diseases in Edinburgh, says: "Stamp knew farmers understood their problems and was able to give effective advice and help; and this he applied when he ran the Veterinary Investigation Service from 1948 to 1954 and was director of the Moredun for the following quarter of a century." My farming constituents were exceedingly grateful.

John Stamp came of a mother and father who were both teachers. Born in Grimsby in

1915, he was brought up in the Potteries and then moved to Edinburgh to study veterinary science and veterinary pathology at the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College.

He made his name very early in his career with a study of the pathogenesis of bovine tuberculosis, for which he was given a DSc. He went on to specialise in tick-borne fever and the enzootic abortion of ewes. He was the first to study nematodirus, a worm-related disease, as a parasite and, with the bacteriologist E.D. McEwen, pioneered the clean field method for its prevention. Their findings on claudia and the related problems of abortion in ewes are recognised as seminal. As Martin puts it: "Some of the work which Stamp undertook on scrapie with colleagues at the Animal Breeding Research Organisation in Edinburgh is of increasing importance with the current interest in BSE."

There must be hardly a student working in this area who does not owe something to Stamp's books and articles in learned journals. In 1969 agricultural scientists at the More-

dun developed a safe vaccine to combat louping-ill in sheep – another tick-borne infection which proved a major problem in the British sheep industry.

His outstanding work in the field of animal health gained Stamp in 1976 the Beldisloe Veterinary Award. At the beginning of his tenure in 1954 the Moredun had a staff of 30 and an annual budget of £40,000. When he retired he handed over to William Martin one of the most distinguished animal disease centres in the world with a staff of 180 and a budget which had increased 30-fold. Stamp had succeeded Russell Greig, who believed that institutes, to do good work, should remain small: rather like an enlarged family. It is the considered judgement of Professor Ian Aitken, the present director of the Moredun, that Stamp grasped the opportunity provided by the public desire in the mid-1950s to improve animal health and production and used very skilfully this groundswell of opinion to win money to build up what is now an internationally distinguished research centre. He captured the spirit of the decade and fitted the require-

ments of the time in his drive for expansion.

Stamp was one of those Englishmen who have contributed hugely to public and scientific life north of the border. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, he was active in the Pathological and Bacteriological Society of Great Britain. He was the senior examiner in veterinary pathology and bacteriology for the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in London, who honoured him by making him their president in 1970. He chaired several committees of the World Food and Agricultural Organisation on specialist animal health problems. In 1970 the decision of the British Council to hold a course on the management of diseases in sheep was taken as a compliment not only Scotland but to the two city-based organisations in Edinburgh, that of Moredun and the Hill Farming Research Institute.

Stamp's activity for the community was by no means limited to science. He was the founder of the East Lothian Yacht Club and the instigator of a number of competitions involving as many as 130 boats.

John Stamp



Stamp: work on scrapie

And, astonishingly for an Englishman, he was asked to be the president of the North Berwick Burns Club. Any Englishman asked to be a Burns club president has really "arrived" north of the border.

Tam Dalyell

John Trevor Stamp, veterinary scientist; born Grimsby 3 December 1915; Director, Moredun Institute of Animal Diseases, 1954-77; FRSE 1956; President of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in London 1970; CBE 1973; married 1941 Margaret Scott (two sons, one daughter); died Haddington 6 December 1996.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

HARE, Sir Edward H. Hare, FRCP FRCR, FRS, MD MA, died peacefully on 1 December 1996. He King's College Hospital, aged 87 years. Will be greatly missed by his wife, Iris, sister, Dennis, daughter, Anne, and grand-daughters, Lucy and Sophie. Burial at Recheshorn Cemetery, Switzerland, 17 December at 11.30am. Family flowers only please.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR GAZETTE BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephone 0171-391 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

Lectures

NATIONAL GALLERY: Colin Wiggin, "Same Difference" (in): Raphael and Bellini", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Ann Eatwell, "Neo-Classical Silver", 2.30pm.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duchess of Gloucester, accompanied by Sir Ivor, statesman, 1360; Heinrich (Harry) Heine, poet and journalist, 1777; Ernst Werner von Siemens, inventor, 1816; Donias Matamoros (Moses ben Matamor), Jewish philosopher, 1304; Donatello (Donato de Betto Barda), sculptor, 1466;

Birthdays

Prince Karim, the Aga Khan, 60; Sir Kenyon Beckett, former Director General, CBI, 73; Mr Howard Branton, playwright, 54; General Arnold Brown, former leader, Salvation Army, 82; Lord Bullock, historian, 82; Mr Jim Davidson, comedian, 42; Sir Brian Fall, Principal, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, 59; Mr John Francome, broadcaster and former doctor, 44; Mr Walter Gibson, Chief Constable, Wilshire, 58; Miss Anouska Hempel, actress, hostess and designer, 55; Dr Douglas Latto, surgeon and gynaecologist, 83; Mr Sir William McEwen, actor, 92; Mr Alex Monk, former chief executive, Tri-Delta Corporation, 54; Sir Brian Pitman, chief executive, Lloyd's Bank, 65; Mr Christopher Plummer, actor, 67; Sir Humphrey Prudéaux, former chairman, Morland and Antiques, 81; Sir Robin Renwick, former Ambassador to the United States, 55; Mr George Shultz, former US Secretary of State, 76; Professor Geoffrey Sims, former Vice-Chancellor, Sheffield University, 70; Maj-Gen Sir David Thorne, Director-General, Commonwealth Trust, 70; Mr Laurens van der Post, writer and explorer, 86; Mr Dick Van Dyke, actor, 71; General Sir Peter Whiteley, former Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces Northern Europe, 76; Miss Paula Wilcox, actress, 47; Mr Brian Wilson, MP, 48.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Maximilien de Bethune, Due de Sully, statesman, 1360; Heinrich (Harry) Heine, poet and journalist, 1777; Ernst Werner von Siemens, inventor, 1816; Donias Matamoros (Moses ben Matamor), Jewish philosopher, 1304; Donatello (Donato de Betto Barda), sculptor, 1466;

Receptions

The partners of Vizards Solicitors held their annual reception yesterday evening at their Temple Hall, London EC4, for their insurance

William Rushton

The satire boom of the early Sixties marked the arrival of a generation of angry young men who were not afraid to show their contempt for authority. William Rushton contributed to this as both a founder of the satirical magazine *Private Eye* and one of the team who brought *That Was the Week That Was* to television.

His impersonation of the Conservative prime minister Harold Macmillan was a highlight of the BBC series, which outraged politicians but was, more significantly, a symbol of the way in which this new generation were truly appalled by the Conservative government of the time.

A cartoonist, humorist and satirist, Rushton – born in London, the son of a publisher and grandson of a Wigan lawyer who was right-hand man to Lord Leverhulme – found a training for his satirical exploits at Shrewsbury School, where his contemporaries included the future editor of *Private Eye* Richard Ingrams, the author Christopher Booker and the journalist Paul Foot. There, they parodied the school magazine, the *Salopian*, with their own publication, the *Wallopian*, exchanging stories of the 1st XI's latest successes for a more irreverent view of the public school and its masters. It included Rushton's cartoons, which were to become a constant part of his output throughout his working life.

It was also at Shrewsbury that Rushton developed his acting talents, notably playing the old man Lord Loam in *The Admirable Crichton*. The audience wondered which elderly member of staff had been dragooned into playing "Loam," he later recalled.

Unlike those Oxbridge graduates such as Peter Cook who were largely responsible for bringing the satire boom to Britain, with its roots in the stage show *Beyond the Fringe*, and in *Private Eye* and the Establishment Club, Rushton did not attend university. He topped up his extra-curricular experiences at Shrewsbury by doing National Service in the

Army, which he described as "one of the funniest institutions on Earth... a sort of microcosm of the world," adding: "It's split almost perfectly into our class system. Through serving in the ranks, I discovered the basic native wit of my fellow man – whom, basically, I'd never met before."

Subsequently finding himself back in civvy street but out of work, he was employed as a clerk in a solicitor's office until, with Richard Ingrams and Christopher Booker, the idea of *Private Eye* was germinated in a Chelsea pub. The magazine, launched in 1961, proved a huge success and it was Rushton's cartoons that helped to establish its distinctive identity.

In the same year, he made his professional stage debut in Spike Milligan's nuclear attack satire *The Bed-Sitting Room* at the Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury. This led to an invitation to join the team that was to launch upon the nation *That Was the Week That Was* (1962-63) on BBC television. The timing was perfect for the new Saturday-night show produced by Ned Sherrin, with *Beyond the Fringe* playing to packed houses in London and the Establishment Club satirists creating new targets for their uncompromising wit.

The previously unknown David Frost was chosen to present *TV3*, as it became known, and his regular cohorts included Rushton, Roy Kinnear, Kenneth Cope, Lance Percival, John Wells, John Bird, Eleanor Bron and Roy Hudd, while Millicent Martin performed songs giving topical events a similarly irreverent perspective. The programme provided an outlet for writers such as Keith Waterhouse, Willis Hall, Malcolm Bradbury, John Cleese, David Nobbs, Jack Rosenthal and Dennis Potter. It quickly caught the imagination of the viewing public, with audiences of up to 13 million and, one week, as many as 443 angry phone calls. As well as his Harold Macmillan impersonation, Rushton was remembered affectionately for his Colonel Buffie Cohen character.

He also had to endure complaints about his scruffiness on the show.

The sequel, *Not So Much a Programme, More a Way of Life* (1964-65), broadcast on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, failed to find the same formula for success and Rushton left, disenchanted, after only a few weeks. Although controversial, the programme lacked the biting humour of the original.

In the meantime, egged on by his *Private Eye* colleagues, Rushton stood against Alec Douglas-Home in the 1963 Kinross by-election but won only 45 votes. Although a lifelong Labour Party supporter, he later admitted that he was not "very good with organisations". Those who knew him reflected that he used humour as a smokescreen to avoid discussing serious issues in a pretentious way. "My basic defence is Blitz humour," he once said.

Another failure was Rushton's short run as host, with the actress Jill Browne, of the television show *The New Stars and Garters* (1965), a retitled series of the traditional pub entertainment variety show *Stars and Garters*. In *TV3* we saw Rushton's cartoons that helped to establish its distinctive identity.

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Rushton's quickfire wit found a more appropriate outlet through 27 series of the BBC Radio 4 show *I'm Sorry, I Haven't a Clue*, starting with its first broadcast in 1967. He also starred as the overgrown schoolboy Nigel Molesworth in the four-part BBC radio series *Molesworth* (1987) and was in demand as a storyteller for *Jackanory* on television. Earlier this year, he toured with Barry Cryer in the stage show *Two Old Farts in the Night*.

To the end, Rushton continued to provide cartoons to a publications ranging from the *Daily Telegraph* and *Independent* to *Private Eye* (1971) and *Adventures of a Private Eye* (1977).

In 1974, Rushton turned up in a dramatic role on television as Major Trumptonning in the BBC series *Colditz*. Complete with red beard, kilt and woolly hat, the character was one of three commandos captured on the French coast and taken to the infamous castle. Rushton's own series *Rushton's Illustrated* (1980) failed to make a great impression and most of his subsequent television appearances were as guest in quiz and game shows such as *Celebrity Squares* (1985-89).

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Dump this tawdry millennium 'monument'

This millennium business is getting ridiculous. Seven months ago we asked: "Is anyone in charge?" And lo, it turned out to be Jack Cunningham, Labour's national heritage spokesman. The Greenwich monument for the year 2000 is to be built with business sponsorship, and business sponsors think we will have a Labour government by then, so they want the project underwritten by future ministers before they stump up the cash. Thus Dr Cunningham finds himself in control of the purse-strings.

"We must be prudent with the Lottery proceeds," he wrote in his most Victorian voice to Virginia Bottomley, who is now more the shadow minister than he is. "It is the people's money."

How right he is, if we can put aside for a moment his obvious delight in the situation.

The wrangle over funding for the Greenwich exhibition exposes the lack of public enthusiasm for the project. Do people stop each other in the checkout queue to say, "Oh good, there's going to be a giant plastic hedgehog on a bit of derelict land in Greenwich"? They do not.

In fact, the plans are for a glass dome, but it will look like plastic. And it is a tacky monument anyway. Domes are a symbol of civic pride in the United States, where any city that

wants to be taken seriously has to have its own American football team and its own dome. The bigger the better, preferably air-conditioned, with "real" artificial turf (this for a working-class game intended to be played in mud and snow).

We are supposed to be proud and inspired that the Greenwich tent-dome, suspended on 12 masts each 100 metres high, will be bigger than the Georgia Dome in Atlanta or the Astrodome in Houston, and twice as big as Wembley Stadium.

Perhaps we British are just naturally sullen and ungrateful, but we are not impressed. This newspaper's architecture correspondent described the concept as a "giant trade fair", a "tawdry and embarrassing" theme park built around corporate advertising.

Astronomers are worried about light pollution from the monstrous illuminated bubble. They have a point: there is a striking symbolism in the fact that it is so difficult to see the stars in so much of suburbanised Britain.

And Prince Charles is worried about the lack of spirituality in the millennium commemorations generally (he has a point, although if he pushes it too far people will point out that 2000 is a Christian date, the significance of which might be lost on atheists and Muslims, and that any-

way Jesus was probably born 2,000 years ago this year).

It is conceivable that neither the commercialised crassness of the Greenwich scheme nor the almost total lack of public interest matters. The Crystal Palace put up in Hyde Park for the 1851 Great Exhibition was conceived as a temporary folly. But it turned out to be so popular that it was moved piece by piece to south London and preserved for posterity (until it burned down in 1936).

When Gustave Eiffel proposed his iron tower, many Parisians thought it would be a hideous eyesore. It

doesn't matter, he said, we can dismantle it after 10 years, when the 1889 centenary of the French Revolution has passed.

Now they say the same about the Millennium Ferris wheel proposed for the south bank of the Thames opposite Big Ben. At least that could be fun, and it is crazy enough to express a sense of confidence in the future which should be at the heart of the celebrations.

But the plastic hedgehog is all wrong and Dr Cunningham would be quite justified if he pulled the plug on it. It is now costed at £700m, of which

£200m would come from the National Lottery. But Dr Cunningham fears the bill could escalate to £1bn, and it is hard to contradict him. The project has been mishandled from the start and it reflects all the faults of both the Government's fraudulent conception of our "national heritage" and the undemocratic oligopoly which is handing out the astonishing piles of public money raised by the Lottery.

All over the country a class of project-brokers has sprung up to foist ambitious and unnecessary schemes on localities whose residents do not want them. The Greenwich scheme is simply the largest and most unwanted of them. Local consultation has been minimal. The local council has been shut out of the meetings. National consultation for this supposedly national and unifying event has been non-existent.

It is a bit late now for these faults to be put right. Michael Heseltine and Virginia Bottomley would have had a much better chance of success if they had decided on the Greenwich site at least a year earlier. Greenwich Council first proposed it in 1993, and the Meridian is indeed the obvious symbolic location.

But there is still time for the rest of us to come up with better ideas, and for Dr Cunningham - in power if not in office - to come up with

more democratic ways of spending Lottery money to back them up.

We like the idea of a Millennium Forest, planting new deciduous trees to link up some of the tattered shreds of woodland left strewn across the suburb of England. But there must be many more bright and forward-looking ideas out there. Let's hear them.

The Spice Girls aren't for turning

That brought us up short. We thought the Spice Girls were too young to remember Margaret Thatcher. But now we must accept them as thoughtful political observers. "Thatcher was the first Spice Girl," says Geri (the red-haired one). She was the pioneer of our ideology - Girl Power". As the song has it: "I'll tell you what I want, what I really, really want." It turns out that girls with power really don't want the single currency, or a Labour government. Tough, Tony: being up with the culture did you no good there. Still, we're more concerned about the Spice Girls themselves: if they follow Maggie's heels too closely, they'll end up recording Kipling and the Gettysburg address, and that won't bring them power. Or much currency, either.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Markets will decide fate of the euro

Sir: You are quite right to point out the dangers of rabid Euroscepticism ("Tories who chime with Europe", 10 December). In a few months' time, when the final criteria for the euro are established, the markets will quickly decide whether it will fly or not, and therein lies the national interest. Mr Clarke is so keen to protect.

On a personal level, we must all decide what is in our own best interest. Love the pound as I might, if the euro means cheaper mortgages, possibly at fixed interest, and more money in my pocket generally, I'll take it. If the Government opts out despite market confidence in the new currency, how will they stop the massive devaluation which would inevitably follow? They can't make it illegal to hold euro accounts, can they?

ROBIN PRIOR
London E8

Sir: Peter Prior (letter, 9 December) suggests that in 50 years' time sterling will be "bobbing helplessly in the waves made by the super-currencies". As one who has yet to make my mind up about the "noble" reasons for joining a federal Europe, I find the argument that there is a need for the UK to be part of a super Euro-currency unconvincing.

The volatile nature of the currency markets will always mean there is a case for strong "smaller" currencies to enable investors to minimise risk. With London already the currency exchange capital of Europe, it would suggest that the financial systems to enable sterling to remain outside the EMU, whilst maintaining authority, already exist.

Dr EDMUND HUGHES
Dublin

Sir: When corporate logos are a widespread fad, may I suggest a design which could represent the preferences of those who (like me) are generally in favour of British involvement in the European Union?

The design, which could be worn as a badge, features a circular version of the British Union flag set in the centre of the EU flag, such that it is surrounded by the golden stars of the latter.

If this idea is considered worthy of merit, may I request as a prize one of the life peerages on offer in your leading article of 10 December?

J.S EVANS
Chesham,
Buckinghamshire

Sir: You reported ("Converts for anti-EU party", 6 December) that Rodney Saunders, a prospective parliamentary candidate for the Referendum Party, had defected to the UK Independence Party.

Mr Saunders was informed that he would not be put forward as a PPC for the party on 13 August 1996.

GREG TREW
Campaign Support Manager,
The Referendum Party
London SW1



Democracy falls victim to stalker

Sir: Wendy Callan's letter (11 December) graphically described the insufferable behaviour that is stalking, and the consequences for

of parliamentary scrutiny means that the real victim of this Bill is democracy.

JONATHAN COOPER
Legal Director, Liberty
London SE1

Czech oppression of gypsies

Sir: On Human Rights Day, 10 December, Lubomir Zubak and other Czech Romani held a protest in the centre of Prague against the rising persecution of their people. The protest continues against a background of pogroms and death threats while gypsies are being excluded from work and driven from their homes.

Ms Callan was unimpressed by her stalker's sentence. However, this does not justify the fact that proposed additional measures to deal with stalking, the Protection from Harassment Bill, are to be rushed through all stages in the House of Commons on 16 December 1996 ("Sweeping penalties in new law on stalkers", 6 December).

The detail of that Bill is disturbing. For instance, it marks a radical shift in what can constitute a criminal offence. Additionally it blurs the traditional constitutional distinctions, and safeguards, between the criminal and civil law. Furthermore, the Bill, once enacted, will add to the ever growing arsenal of laws which already exists to regulate public and private behaviour.

The decision to push the legislation through in one day highlights the democratic deficit which is now prevalent within government. Ironically, this denial

In the evening this statement was handed to the Czech ambassador in support of the Prague protest: "We request that the Czech government will do everything in its power to ensure equal citizenship, social justice and personal safety for the Roma of the Czech Republic. The United Nations has declared 1997 the Year of Tolerance and Understanding. Let its funds be used for this urgent task."

ANTHONY JULIUS
MAREK KOHN
Dr MARGARET BREARLY
(Institute for Jewish Policy Research)
Dr DONALD KENRICK
(Romany Institute)
PETER MERCER
(Gypsy Council for Education,
Welfare and Human Rights)
MORIS FARHI
EVA EBERHARDT
(Phare)
and others
London W1

No antibiotics in the milk

Sir: Mr Coleman's letter ("Farm antibiotics the real danger", 9 December) contains a number of inaccuracies.

If a dairy cow is treated with antibiotics, its milk is withheld from the food chain until any trace of antibiotics disappear. Therefore antibiotic residues are not normally present in milk. Samples of milk for testing are regularly taken on the farm and again at processing

centres. Any farmer supplying milk containing antibiotic residues is liable to severe financial penalties.

Mr Coleman is mistaken when he suggests that milk used to make yoghurt has to be heated to high temperatures in order to inactivate antibiotics which would otherwise kill a yoghurt culture. The reason many dairy companies give milk a high-heat treatment in yoghurt-making has nothing to do with antibiotics. The treatment alters the structure of the proteins in the milk and gives yoghurt the desired texture.

ANNE STACEY
Information Services Manager
National Dairy Council
London W1

Teachers work all hours

Sir: Last week I worked over 55 hours and I spent five hours on Sunday working on a new scheme of work for mathematics. On Monday I arrived in school before 8.30am and left, after a governors' meeting, at 9.30pm. The

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report that UK primary teachers work longer than their colleagues in other countries - 950 hours per year and fourth highest in the OECD's list of 20 countries - seems to grossly underestimate my workload and that of my colleagues in primary schools ("Britain's teachers at top of pay league", 10 December).

The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document of 1996, like

its predecessors for many years, states that "a teacher shall be available to perform ... duties ... specified by the headteacher for 1,265 hours in any school year". It continues, "A teacher shall ... work such additional hours as may be needed to enable him to discharge effectively his professional duties, including, in particular, the marking of pupils' work, the writing of reports on pupils and the preparation of lessons, teaching material and teaching programmes".

For a headteacher the only reference to working hours is that "a headteacher shall be entitled to a break of reasonable length during the course of each school day". I can't remember the last uninterrupted lunchtime I had.

DAVID CORNWALL
Headteacher, St Matthew's CE
School
Westnewton, Cumbria

Free the children

Sir: Denis MacShane asks what can be done to stop child labour ("These small slaves need liberation", 9 December).

Unicef's State of the World's Children Report 1997, published on 11 December, states that provision of universal education is vital. Initially school removes children from the workplace. It also equips them with the knowledge and skills to enable them to exercise some autonomy in the work they do in adulthood.

Our government should be promoting education for all, and more aid spending should be directed towards this goal.

JANINE FEARON
Sheffield, South Yorkshire

Your jackpot prize - a peerage

Sir: Your criticism of Lord Cranborne ("Why Labour should send the lords 'Jeeping'", 10 December) rests upon a confusion. Every lottery produces results which, according to some other principle, seem biased. What the hereditary system does for the legislature is to bring in people who are not retired politicians, not those who have reached the top of some other ladder, not invariably in the second half of their lives.

If it is an objection that hereditary peers tend to be landowning males with upper-class accents, the remedy is not to abolish them but to introduce peers with some other sorts of ordinariness. The ancient Athenians used to choose members of the Boule by lot from suitably selected constituencies: in modern Britain the National Lottery is suitably biased away from the upper classes. Why not add to the jackpot a seat in the House of Lords?

J.R.LUCAS
East Lambrook, Somerset

Sir: There exists a precedent for compromise between those who, like Lord Richard, would totally abolish the rights of hereditary peers and those like Lord Cranborne who would retain the *status quo*. It is the Act of Union of 1707, whereby 16 of those with exclusively Scottish titles were to be elected by their peers in Edinburgh at every general election of Parliament. This they did until 1963, when the Peerage Act entitled all Scottish peers to attend and vote, and the system of representation ended.

The House of Lords could be reformed to accommodate a fraction of the present hereditary peers, elected by their peers of the UK as a whole, thus greatly reducing the hereditary element in the House to a small group sitting there through a combination of tradition and merit.

JAMES ALLAN
Edinburgh

Sir: In so far as the hereditary principle can still be justified in the governance of nations, Lord Archer's Bill to place men and women on an equal footing with regard to the succession to the throne has much to commend it (report, 10 December).

However, under the Statute of Westminster, no change to the law of succession to the British throne may be made without the consent of the parliaments of the Dominions (of which there are now upwards of a dozen). I trust that this aspect of the law will be given serious attention before Lord Archer's proposal is allowed to progress to Royal Assent.

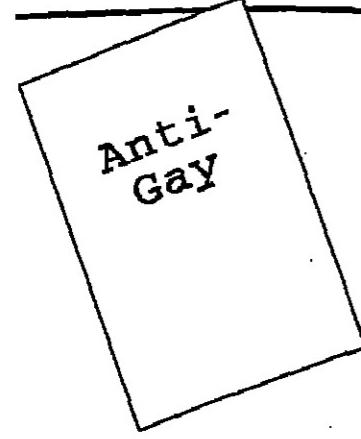
STEPHEN G LINSTEAD
Solihull,
West Midlands

Rainbow rage

Sir: The "bright yellow burglar alarm box" which a Gloucestershire couple "have been ordered to camouflage" by Cotswold District Council (report, 9 Dec) is only part of the problem.

Recently driving through the area, I was dismayed by the bright red, amber and green of the traffic lights, while even more disturbing was the eye-searing fluorescent clothing of the road workers and their vehicles' flashing beacons. I'm not one to complain, but really ... ROBERT VINCENT
Andover, Hampshire

debate



Are homosexuals gay?

Anti-Gay, a collection of essays by 'non-heterosexuals' in revolt against the pill-popping, hedonistic culture of the club scene, has divided the homosexual community. Two of our writers take sides ...

GAY

Simon Edge

Editors love nothing better than a truth turned on its head, and Mark Simpson, the editor of *Anti-Gay*, knows it. The master of the gender-bending paradox, Mark subverts stereotypes to a hilarious formula: I'm gay but I don't like disco; I'm gay but I don't fancy gay men; I'm gay but I don't like gay bars.

With *Anti-Gay*, he has taken the joke to its logical conclusion. Proudly describing himself as a far from happy homosexual, he invites his fellow contributors to tilt at the windmill of monolithic gay culture and pronounces himself 'bored with "gay".'

On these pages, John Lytle gives "gay", a la Simpson, a capital G and lol – ideological conflict is born. Before you can say Tom Robinson, Mark has become the scourge of brainless hedonism, offering a bridge back to the halcyon days when we were miserable, but at least we knew why.

You might expect an argument between "gay" and "anti-gay" to place between Ian McKellen and Edwina Currie in one corner, and Dame Jill Knight and Terry Dicks in the other. That the terminology doesn't quite fit offers an early clue that Mark's zany publishing wheeze is not quite the cerebral bombshell it is cracked up to be. But since *Anti-Gay* has become a rallying point for all those who fear that the gay community is pill-popping itself into oblivion, it is time to knock that myth on the head once and for all.

We have simply never had it so gay. A senior member of the Shadow Cabinet is out and unscathed, as is a Tory back-bencher. The deputy chairman of the Conservative Party attends a gay rights gala. The Archbishop of Canterbury says homosexuals are made in God's image. A gay activist is knighted. A High Court judge says the ban on lesbians and gay men serving in the armed forces is indefensible. Gay celebs are never off the box, and woe betide the soap without a gay character. Even

The world is being forced to decide whose side it's on – and the answer is increasingly ours. You can still be sacked for being gay, but it happens less often because more people will make a fuss. Many of us still face prejudice from families, neighbours and colleagues, and queer-bashers still stalk the streets. Nevertheless, it is easier to come out than ever before, because fewer people bat an eyelid when we do: the 200,000 people who attend our annual Pride festival these days are living proof that homophobia is alive and well in too many walks of life, but gay people are incomparably better off in 1996 than we were one decade ago, let alone two or three.

But for Mark and contributors such as Peter Tatchell and Paul Burton, not to mention the blessed Lytle, there is a problem.

The Nineties have also seen a relentless growth in the commercial gay scene and a cult of rampant consumerism. Read the free gay press nowadays and little exists beyond the party culture of drugs, dance music and disco fits – for the boys, of course. If you don't conform in looks, age, (cup) size, spending power or HIV antibody status, your invitation has effectively been lost in the post. Nobody said the New Jerusalem would have such narrow visa requirements.

The "anti-gays" accept without question that the dual phenomena of extraordinary progress and wild hedonism are naturally antagonistic. You can see why the press, once investigative, now largely trash advertorial, winds them up: cover headlines such as "Is your penis big enough?" and "Maddonna [sic] as Evita" are hardly the pinnacle of homosexual creative achievement. And surely buking pectorals and pavement cappuccino cannot be the motor of social change?

But they are, Blanche, they are. In the Seventies, the only public images of homosexuality were Larry Grayson and Mr Humphreys from *Are You Being Served?*

"Shut that door," Larry advised, and by crikey we did: as a mixed-up gay teenager, I padlocked myself inside the closet. Thankfully, times have changed. Glad to be gay has become a lifestyle, not a gritted-teeth slogan, and brash images of a cocky and glamorous subculture are hard to miss. When papers like the *Evening Standard* run a gay clubbing section, you know we're winning. Hail Mary, they think we're hip.

At long last, we're gay in both the ancient and modern senses of the word, and our gayness is a beacon for those trapped in the mystery of repression and self-denial

senses of the word, and our gayness is a beacon, a benign siren call for those trapped in the misery of repression and self-denial. The knock-on effect is liberating collectively as well as individually. It means more lesbian and gay people stand up for themselves and for us all – in the street, at work and in the family – thereby hacking great chunks off the edifice of prejudice. That, in turn, makes it easier for others to come out. The vicious circle, where the closet gave prejudice its life-blood and prejudice strengthened the closet, has suddenly turned virtuous.

Commercialism breeds more diversity than it gets credit for – show me the straight equivalent of the thriving clubs for fat gay men, where "body fascism" is outlawed – but that's not the point. The party culture is important as a means, not an end. Hedonism, whether it knows it or not, is the best tool we have ever had for emptying the closets, and it has fuelled, not undermined, the gains of the gay Nineties. It's the greatest ideology of them all. And if Mark and his friends prefer straight bars, they will find less prejudice there as a result of it.

Le's set the record bent. Homosexuality and Gay are separate entities. To be homosexual is to be attracted to the same sex, full stop, period. To be Gay is to be attracted to members of the same sex and John Richmond tops, rainbow flags, Gina G CDs and pineapple-scented hair gel.

Homosexuality is doing what comes naturally. Gay is a cultural and – more and more – a commercial construct, a one-size-fits-all identity: homosexual men are not only told "Suits you, sir" – even when the tight fit is obviously constricting blood flow to the brain – but also that it will actually liberate them, bring equality, basic civil liberties, everything: if they'll toe the party, party, party line.

It wasn't always so. Gay used to be a rallying cry, then an ad hoc, seldom agreed but affirming ideology that propelled the brow-beaten out of the closet,

out of invisibility and into ... what? Gay would claim the light, which, of course loosely translates as "ghetto".

The ghetto – like Gay – should have been a phase we were going through. A stopping and coping off place to gather thoughts and forces, a safe yet transitory retreat when we weren't advancing. Except that Gay got stuck in the fun: in predictably, addictively defining itself solely through (yawn) sex. This was a classic own goal and a clear contradiction, for the aim, Gay proclaimed, was mainstream acceptance, assimilation, the end of difference making a difference. Which explains why homophobia

loves, not loathes, Gay. Gay gives documentary justification to shall claims of heedless hedonism. And Gay requires homophobia. It keeps the queers safely about how "they" define us, deflecting attention from the urgent subject of how we redefine ourselves in a time that could soon see us married, with children, or, worse, in the military. Surely we wanted to be less of the minority and more of the masses: everyday and ordinary, with no need to be always pathologically proud or upbeat; allowed, at last, to relax and have off days too.

Only Gay can't move on. It clings to the freedom of its chains, refusing even

ANTI-GAY

John Lytle

to discuss what the future may do to the way we think and feel about ourselves beyond chanting Gay is Good. Once a proud parent, Gay has exhausted its primary purpose, and seen its day, become a brand name, a think pink (pound) phenomenon with a self-self-justifying chat-up line. And the punters fall for it time after time: pleasure is, God damn it, their birthright, especially after the crap that the big, bad world has thrown at them, poor little diddums. And, Gay gasps, they needn't be ashamed of grandiose consumption, for – how canny, how convenient – their pleasure, like the personal, is political.

Which is kind of true. If you're desisted, feeling better about yourself is a mandatory baby step. And then? What's next? Now what? How is hard-won visibility harnessed? How do you slip the ra-ra-ra back into radical?

In the main, you don't. One to achieve Gayhood is the end in itself. Two, if the message is that revolution really exists in revolutions per minute, then the first step is the second step is the third step – a dance step. Follow the bouncing logic: the freeing of the non-heterosexual from the killer coils of bigotry and oppression will be the first time in human history that shaking it, and putting it, about on a Saturday night has granted a downtrodden minority their inalienable human rights.

Sure. Not that Gay wants anyone to stop and pull it over. Neither does Gay want you pondering upon otherwise inexplicable attacks on the campaigning, plod, plod, plod. Pick up the Gay press and witness the sumping at Stonewall, the organisation behind the lowering of the homosexual age of consent, the regular savaging of Outrage, et al. Nonsensical, unless you understand that Gay, the franchise, is (subliminally?) attempting to maintain a rather cosy status quo. It (unconsciously?) realises that battling through the courts, domestic and European, will inevitably forge a future that will transform a certain sensibility and scene, beyond recognition – and probably trash profit margins. Yet Gay – fooling no one but itself – screams it wants change. Indeed, it claims sole credit for it.

You know the rap – it's an update of that hardsy perennial, Famous Faggots of History: how Gay, and Gay alone, single-handedly changed the world. See, that pop star is Gay, that MP is Gay, haven't you clocked Eastenders, what about Michael Barrymore for a role model, etc. The idea that Aids may have horribly, relentlessly, raised and altered public consciousness isn't even considered.

Neither is the effect of feminism, nor the collapse of the family, nor the role of capitalising itself in making previously condemned lifestyles commonplace. Gay has a vision, all right, and it's tunnel. It cannot imagine that it did not transform the environment; rather, that the environment transformed it.

Which is a matter of faith. Gay is a faith – a faith for the few. Certainly not for the black, the fat, the female (unless she sings), the over-40, or those who know a straitjacket from a life jacket. It's a faith with its face permanently before the mirror without ever seeing itself (well, look what happened to Caliban). Convicted of its rightness, unaccustomed to challenge, Gay need not argue issues. Instead it lays down the law, smugly accusing the heretic of bringing the Word into disrepute, of (revealingly) "miserabilism", and of "internalised homophobia".

Gay cannot bring itself to believe you mean what you say. There has to be something wrong with you. Which magically returns us to the political being personal – very personal. And to that confusion between homosexuality and Gay that allows the latter to pontificate for the former, so arrogantly certain of itself that it forgets all faith finally fails, and that life's single lesson for everyone is Adapt or Die.



IN THIS WEEKEND'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



THE REAL LIFE CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR CLUB GUIDE

Tis the season to get back on the dance floor. If you're a once-a-year clubber or an old hand you need our comprehensive festive clubbing guide – over 100 events nationwide

IN THE SUNDAY REVIEW

Remembrance of times past... In what she believes will be her last major piece of published writing, Martha Gellhorn (right), looks back on some extraordinary moments from her extraordinary life

'One of the most wonderful chapters in the whole history of art...' David Sylvester on early Cubism

Plus: Andy Beckett on a thoroughly modern drifter, and the very best of Christmas wines and liqueurs



Fobbing people off, the English way

Today, as a service to students of English as a foreign language, or just to students of the British people, I am bringing you a list of fourscore different ways in which you can say "I cannot help you" in English, a phrase that has made us a legend through the international business and industrial world.

I would like to help you, but ...

Much as I would like to help you ...

With the best will in the world ...

I only wish ...

I'm afraid I cannot be of assistance.

I'm extremely sorry.

I'm very sorry.

Sorry.

Sorry, but there it is.

Sorry, darling.

Afraid not.

Count me out.

No can do.

No way. It's not on.

It's not a possibility.

What we are looking at is

not in the realm of the

possible.

Out of the question.

Not a chance in hell.

Chance would be fine thing.

I should coco.

Pull the other one.

Do me a favour.

And pigs might fly.

And I'm the Queen of

Sheba.

I haven't got four pairs of

hands.

I can't work miracles.

Are you serious?

Are you taking the Michael?

Are you winding me up?

Are you on the level?



Miles Kington

Not in a month of Sundays.

Not in a blue moon.

Not in a Preston Guild.

Not on your nelly.

I can't see it.

I'm not with you.

I cannot see my way to

granting your request.

Miracles we can do, the

impossible takes a little longer.

This is not my department.

You have come to the wrong person.

Not down this neck of the woods.

Wrong number, old son.

Hard cheese.

Tough titty.

No dice.

Not a chance.

Forget it.

You should be so lucky.

Look...

Look, darling...

Look, darling, I'd love to help, but ...

Look, darling, I'd love to help, but you're asking the impossible.

Please don't insist ...

Oh, yeah?

You and whose army?

Sez who?

Wanna bet?

Are you sure?

Are you trying it on?

You've picked the wrong customer.

Nobody says that to me and gets away with it!

You're out of order.

You're way over the top.

You're crying for the moon.

I refuse to co-operate until you remove the beef bar but ...

Back to the beginning and start again.

business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

CONTINUED

Guinness report likely to slate top City figures

Jeremy Warner

Several leading City figures are expected to be strongly criticised in a Department of Trade and Industry report on the Guinness affair to be published next week. Ten years after government inspectors were sent in to investigate the company.

The long-delayed report is to be published "within days" of a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights on whether accepted civil liberties were infringed in prosecuting Ernest Saunders, the former Guinness chairman, and others.

Government sources say the report will be published re-

gardless of whether the European Court comes down in favour of Mr Saunders. Judgment is expected to be handed down on Tuesday.

The DTI report has already been redrafted to take account of the acquittal on the charges of Thomas Ward, the American lawyer caught up in the Guinness affair, and the Serious Fraud Office's decision to drop proceedings against David Mayhew, a senior partner of the stockbrokers, Cazenove.

However, the DTI's inspectors, David Donaldson QC and

Ian Watt, remain scathing in their analysis of events surrounding Guinness's bid for Distillers in the mid-1980s and highly critical of a number of those involved.

One source said: "This is going to be a big embarrassment to those hoping the Guinness affair had gone away for good. It's coming back to haunt them."

The report steers clear of criticising the professionals caught up in the affair – lawyers and accountants – but there is severe castigation of eight of the main protagonists. Also singled out

for strong criticism Morgan Greifell, which advised Guinness on the Distillers takeover. Several others are cited in language that alleges negligence and varying degrees of involvement.

The report also touches on some smaller "share support" frauds which took place in the City at about the same time.

No view is expressed on whether part of a secret £5.2m payment by Guinness which mysteriously passed through Mr Saunders' Swiss bank account was intended for him. Mr

Saunders has consistently denied it. The episode was never the subject of charges against Mr Saunders, but the payment was examined at length during his trial.

The Guinness affair resulted in the conviction for fraud of four men – Mr Saunders, Tony Parnes, the stockbroker, Gerald Ronson, the property tycoon, and Sir Jack Lyons, patron of the arts. All except the last of these were jailed.

Criminal proceedings against a further three, David Mayhew, Lord Spens and Roger Seelig,

were abandoned while Mr Ward was acquitted after a lengthy fight against extradition from the US.

The DTI report deals with Guinness's attempt artificially to inflate its own share price during the contested £2.7bn bid for Distillers, thereby enhancing its chances of winning.

Guinness secretly indemnified a series of "supporters" against any loss they might sustain in buying the company's shares. Some £25m was later paid in "success fees" and commissions, much of it through ob-

ligations to answer the questions of inspectors on pain of imprisonment. There is as a consequence no protection against self-incrimination.

Lawyers familiar with the case expect the European Court to come down strongly against the Government in its use of DTI inspectors to collect evidence. However, the judges are not expected to overturn the conviction and may go further by publicly stating the prosecution would have succeeded even in the absence of the DTI transcripts.

Publication of the report will bring to a close one of the most protracted episodes in British corporate history.

Spending triggers inflation fears

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Buoyant consumer spending is bringing the threat of higher inflation and imports, while the strong pound has started to hit exports. So official figures on retail prices and the latest CBI survey of industry suggested yesterday.

Rising prices on the high street meant the target measure of inflation did not edge down in November, disappointing some economists. Many believe interest rates should go up if the Government wants to hit its inflation

target. Separately, the CBI reported that the rise in the exchange rate had taken export orders to their lowest for nearly three years. If I predicted a ballooning balance of payments deficit next year.

"It is a weaker form of the classic British pattern of rising inflation and a balance of payments gap, although we do have a better performance by UK companies now," said Sudhir Junankar, a CBI economist.

Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, speaking in Lisbon the evening after Wednesday's monetary meet-

ing, repeated his view that base rates need to rise. "The sooner the question is addressed, the better," he said, although he added that rates would not have to go much higher.

Most City experts believe that although the Governor did not persuade Kenneth Clarke to take his advice this week, the Chancellor will be forced to act in January or February.

The Treasury said November's 3.3 per cent inflation on the target measure was likely to fall during the next few months, as a period of falling prices last year dropped out of the 12-month rate.

However, the details of yesterday's figures suggested that retailers might be trying to increase their margins in the face of strong consumer demand. Prices for household goods increased by 1 per cent during the month, and clothing and footwear prices were up 1.1 per cent following a record 5.2 per cent increase in September.

The price of leisure goods increased by 0.6 per cent. Motoring costs fell in November, but not as much as a year earlier. Service prices rose little during the month but are trending upwards.

Lower food prices offset much of the damage, falling 0.4 per cent during November to a level only 1.5 per cent above a year earlier. Meat prices fell sharply, especially pork and poultry, reversing some of the big increases triggered by the beef crisis.

Concerns about inflation were increased by a jump in the balance of manufacturers planning to raise their prices, from 8 per cent to 12 per cent. The CBI's survey showed price expectations had jumped to their highest since March after several extremely subdued months.

"Manufacturers seem to have set their heart on New Year price rises," said John O'Sullivan at NatWest Markets. US industry sources also confirmed that since the market's terrors began last week, the torrent of cash into mutual funds has slowed. Such funds have seen investment soar to \$207.9bn (£125bn) this year, 50 per cent higher than the previous year.

Legal & General, which manages close to £50bn of funds, said it planned to be a net seller of UK equities and raise cash balances from around 3 per cent to as high as 6 per cent of its portfolio next year ahead of what it expects to be growing inflationary pressures in the economy.

The group compared the £1.1bn of impending mutual societies flotation with the enormous equity withdrawal from soaring

house values during the "Lawson boom" of the late 1980s. Such windfall gains could "leak" back into the broader economy at the rate of between £5bn to £10bn a year, equivalent to 4p off the basic rate of income tax, the group claimed. That will help fuel a 4 per cent growth in consumer spending next year. L&G expects the first time since 1988 and 1989 that growth has reached 4 per cent.

After a storming 16.2 per cent return in 1996, the group is expecting the return to slow to just 4 per cent over the next 12 months with the FTSE 100 index ending the year around the current level of 4,000.

M&G, the fund management group, also said yesterday it expects a subdued performance from the stock market as a whole.

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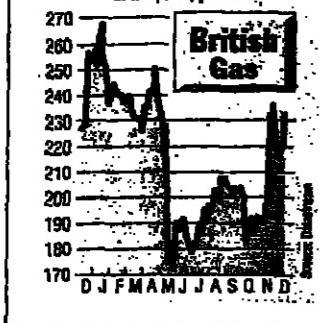
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market report / shares

Data Bank	
FTSE 100	3990.7 +8.2
FTSE 250	4379.5 +12.7
FTSE 350	1983.1 +4.4
SEAO VOLUME	693.7m shares,
Gilts Index	31,790 bargains
93.73	-0.35

Share spotlight	
share price, pence	
270	
260	
250	
240	
230	
220	
210	
200	
190	
180	
170	
DJ F M A J J A S O N D	



British Gas makes a sudden surge amid bid stories

British Gas may be Britain's most unpopular utility but it has suddenly discovered a few friends in the stock market.

Their attention fuelled a 14.5p gain to 233p, the best performance by any blue chip. Takeover stories went the rounds so did suggestions that the break-up value is nearer 300p a share.

What was clearly apparent was that the market was short of Gas shares and relatively modest demand created an exaggerated advance.

Still Gas has been under close scrutiny since Shell felt obliged to deny long-running rumours it intended to bid.

British Petroleum, off 9p at 658.5p, is the latest predatory candidate.

In February, just over 10 years after privatisation, Gas's institutional shareholders and army of 1.5 million Sids will vote on the plan to split the

group into two - Centrica and BG plc. It looks as though some institutions feel they are overweight ahead of the merger and are quietly trying to strengthen their position in an unwilling market.

Many believe the bid - if it does appear - will not materialise until after the break-up, which will leave one side supplying 20 million domestic customers and running the Morecambe Bay gas field and the other operating the pipeline network and the rest of the gas exploration and production business.

The gas giant also, at last, seems to be getting in control of its hugely expensive take-over North Sea gas deals. The first settlement was with BP costing £293m. Other agreements are expected in the next few months.

Shell put on 5p to 978p ahead of analysts' meetings today in London and in New

York on Monday. The rest of the market struggled. Early gains were cut back and Footsie had to be content with an 8.2-point advance to 3,990.7 after at one time enjoying a 27.4 climb.

Orange, the mobile phone group, dialled the right number, gaining 9.5p to 178.5p on the likelihood of improved revenue as it renegotiates its arrangements with BT Cable and Wireless, another beneficiary through Mercury, up on 4p to 452p.

Glam Wellcome managed a 6p gain to 944p despite sell advice from HSBC James Capel. The stockbroker has, it seems, cut its profit expec-

tations because of sterling's strength and a modest slip in margins. Capel is said to have reduced from £3.1bn to £2.93bn for this year and from £3.25bn to £3.08bn for next. ML Laboratories was little changed at 202.5p after switching from the dying USM to full listing.

Hays and Mercury Asset Management "celebrated" their promotion to the Footsie index with falls. With NatWest Securities deciding the time is ripe to remove Hays from its buy list after more than three years, the shares of the business support group fell 3.5p to 534.5p. The investment house now re-

gards Hays as no more than a hold. Fund manager MAM lost 4p to 1,231.5p. Biocompagnies International, elevated to the 250 index, jumped 37.5p to 742.5p.

Associated British Foods, a narrow market, improved 18.5p to 459p, a peak. A flurry of stories went the rounds including suggestions the family-controlled giant was thinking of paying a special dividend. Recently its Australian offshoot announced a special payment and the feeling is the parent will follow its example.

Transport Development Group advanced 10p to 178.5p. Merrill Lynch took a 9.8 per cent (14.5 million shares) buyback at 180p.

Stakis, the casino and hotel group, rose 2p to 91p; the 22.2 million rump of its rights issue was placed at 85.5p. Kier, the builder, made a firm debut, hitting 184.5p

from its 170p placing. British Motor, the textile group, fell 18.5p to 100p on its profits warning and Baggsbridge Brick crumbled 14p to 97.5p on its 46.5 per cent profit setback.

Wiggins, the property group, rose 0.5p to 5p. It placed 14.5 million shares with Compania Financiera La Granja, a company associated with Maurice Smulders, a property developer. La Granja now has 4.26 per cent. CPL Aromas gained 16.5p to 186.5p on suggestions a hovering line of stock had been cleared. The shares were 507p in the spring.

Ideal Hardware fell 10p to 642.5p after four directors sold 8.44 per cent (1.79 million) at 630p.

Great Western Resources, an oil and gas group, added 2p to 21.5p as Forcenergy, a US group, bid equal to 23p

from its 170p placing. Gabriel Trust, an AIM-listed financial group, has acquired 14.85 per cent of Offex-traded Charfield Fund Management, which embraces the Waverley unit trust. It is thought Gabriel, headed by David Peart, will attempt to gain control of Charfield, run by Mark Flaws Thomas, who has 32 per cent.

In the summer Charfield agreed to buy stockbroker John Siddall and fund manager Fair Isle. But the deal failed to go through. Charfield shares are 60p; they opened on Oxpeck at 50p in April. Gabriel fell 1p to 15p.

John Ritblat, head of British Land, is increasing his holding in Artesian Estates by selling properties at Letton and Norwood in exchange for shares, lifting his stake to 26.47 per cent. The shares held at 68.5p; the Ritblat deal was fixed at 70p.

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

Greenall's

Share Price Data									
Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, expressed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: Ex rights x Ex dividend d Ex all u United Securities Market & Suspended pp Party Paid pm NI Field Share, \$ AM Stock									
Source: FT Information									
The Independent Index									
The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from Smeo, Simply Dial 0891 223 333, followed by the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 223 333 followed by one of the two-digit codes below:									
FTSE 100 - Real-time 00 Sterling Rate 04 Privatisation Issues 36									
UK Stock Market Report 01 Bullion Report 05 Water Shares 39									
UK Company News 02 Wall St Report 20 Electricity Shares 40									
Foreign Exchange 03 Tokyo Market 21 High Street Banks 41									
Anyone with a tone-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of the Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0891 223 333. For assistance, call our helpline 071 673 4275 (0800 - 800pm).									
Call cost 5p per minute (daytime), 15p per minute at all other times. Call charges include:									
Market Leaders: Top 20 volumes									
Stock	Vol/000	Stock	Vol/000	Stock	Vol/000	Stock	Vol/000	Stock	Vol/000
Chase	262000	ASDA Group	560000	MFI	70000	Imperial Tobacco	550000	BP	620000
BP Inc.	172000	BT	52000	Legal & General	50000	Prudential	50000	Shell	570000
Vodafone	122000	Globe Telecom	760000	BP	94000	State	94000	HSBC (75p sh)	400000
BTR	122000	National Bank	750000	Tesco	94000	Tesco	94000	Lloyds TSB	40000
Balfour Beatty	102000	Lloyds TSB	750000	Barclays	40000	Barclays	40000	None	40000
FTSE 100 Index hour by hour									
14.00	3890.05	up 220	14.00	3890.05	up 220	14.00	3890.05	up 220	14.00
13.00	3890.05	up 216	13.00	3890.05	up 216	13.00	3890.05	up 216	13.00
12.00	3890.05	up 214	12.00	3890.05	up 214	12.00	3890.05	up 214	12.00
11.00	3890.05	up 212	11.00	3890.05	up 212	11.00	3890.05	up 212	11.00
10.00	3890.05	up 210	10.00	3890.05	up 210	10.00	3890.05	up 210	10.00
9.00	3890.05	up 208	9.00	3890.05	up 208	9.00	3890.05	up 208	9.00
8.00	3890.05	up 206	8.00	3890.05	up 206	8.00	3890.05	up 206	8.00
7.00	3890.05	up 204	7.00	3890.05	up 204	7.00	3890.05	up 204	7.00
6.00	3890.05	up 202	6.00	3890.05	up 202	6.00	3890.05	up 202	6.00
5.00	3890.05	up 200	5.00	3890.05	up 200	5.00	3890.05	up 200	5.00
4.00	3890.05	up 198	4.00	3890.05	up 198	4.00	3890.05	up 198	4.00
3.00	3890.05	up 196	3.00	3890.05	up 196	3.00	3890.05	up 196	3.00
2.00	3890.05	up 194	2.00	3890.05	up 194	2.00	3890.05	up 194	2.00
1.00	3890.05	up 192	1.00	3890.05	up 192	1.00	3890.05	up 192	1.00
0.00	3890.05	up 190	0.00	3890.05	up 190	0.00	3890.05	up 190	0.00
Government Securities									
Index-linked	100.00	Stock	100.00	Stock	100.00	Stock	100.00	Stock	100.00
Shorts	99.95	Stock	99.95	Stock	99.95	Stock	99.95	Stock	99.95
Mediums	99.90	Stock	99.90	Stock	99.90	Stock	99.90	Stock	99.90
Longs	99.85	Stock	99.85	Stock	99.85	Stock	99.85	Stock	99.85

Greenalls gathers a potent portfolio

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Greenalls has not put a foot wrong since the Beer Orders of 1989 convinced it that it made more sense to jump on the retail and leisure bandwagon than continue slugging it out with the likes of Bass and Scottish & Newcastle in a declining, over-supplied brewing market.

The acquisition of Devenish, which had reached the same conclusion itself, was followed a year ago by the £600m purchase of Boddington, another brewer whose well-known beer brand is now part of the Whitbread stable.

Full-year figures yesterday for the 12 months to September confirmed that the deal is bedding in nicely and the promised savings of £18m a year are on track. In the short term the return on that investment might not be as exciting as some of Greenalls' smaller rivals can claim from their developments but as a long-term strategic move the deal made abundant sense.

Boddington was such a sizeable acquisition, even for a giant pub group like Greenalls, that the company chose to report two sets of figures. Excluding the newly acquired pubs, underlying profits rose a steady 11 per cent to £111.5m, earnings per share were 10 per cent better at 38.5p and the full-year dividend rose 9 per cent to 15.4p.

Adding in the £47.1m of operating profit Boddington made in the 11 months since acquisition, reported pre-tax profits emerged at £148.7m, a 48 per cent increase.

Greenalls has established itself as the pre-eminent food and drink retailer outside the big integrated brewing and pub groups. From a small, family-run operation at the end of the 1980s it has flirted with FTSE 100 membership this year, a size which gives it considerable clout within the industry. When current beer supply contracts with Bass and Whitbread run out in a couple of years you can bet Scottish Courage will want a slice of the action and buying terms can only improve.

Elsewhere, the company is becoming a serious contender in the buoyant hotel, fitness and leisure market, it runs a portfolio of more than 1,100 tenanted pubs and is one of the country's biggest drinks wholesalers. It is an enviable portfolio.

The disadvantage of Greenalls' size is that it is finding it difficult to grow at anything other than a solid, respectable rate. Forecasts for the current year of £165.5m pre-tax profits and £18.1m next time mean earnings per share are growing at rather less than 10 per cent a year. In the middle of a strong consumer recovery, that is hardly breathtaking progress and the

current market rating is as good as can be expected in the short run. The shares, which closed 10.5p lower at 591.5p, are worth holding, but only on a longer-term view.

DMGT invests for profits

The owners of the struggling Express Newspapers might learn a lesson or two from the record of the mighty *Mail*, part of the media empire owned by Daily Mail & General Trust. To make money, you have to invest money.

That maxim appears to be behind DMGT's excellent results in the year to September, when pre-tax profits climbed a 28 per cent to £55.5m on revenues ahead to £1bn, a rise of 15 per cent.

The crown jewels are the *Daily Mail* and the *Mail on Sunday*. Both enjoyed circulation gains, with the daily ahead year-on-year by 13 per cent and the Sunday up 5 per cent. Regional newspapers, grouped under the Northcliffe subsidiary, also performed strongly, posting their highest profit.

Greenalls : at a glance



The group has not been shy about investing for the future, and shareholders have had to put up with quite pedestrian operating margins as a result. This past year, the margin has been about 7 per cent, which will probably increase to about 10 per cent in 1997 well short of the traditional 15 per cent enjoyed by successful newspapers.

It hardly matters at this stage, given the excellent growth in profits and the aggressive dividend policy that has been in place since 1989. But newspapers are not the whole story. DMGT has made calculated, if contained, investments in a range of media: Cable (Channel One), radio (in Sweden and Australia), electronic publishing and Internet sites. The acquisition and investment strategy appears to be well-rooted in sound principles.

In the medium term, DMGT's prospects look impressive, as it begins to reap the rewards of its aggressive investment policy. Moderating prices for newsprint, down by some 12 per cent since the middle of the year, will either drop straight to the bottom line or be used to enhance the titles yet further.

In time, DMGT will probably reward its shareholders with improving margins.

gains, which suggest an even rosier outlook for pre-tax profits. Combined with a relatively light tax rate (thanks to capital allowances), the effect will be to highlight the degree to which the shares are now undervalued.

Expected pre-tax profits of about £120m in the year to September 1997 (79.5p a share), rising to £145m in 1998 (96p) put the shares on a forward multiple of just 15. Good value.

All go at Wainhomes

It has been an eventful year at Wainhomes, the regional housebuilder whose shares were floated at 170p two years ago. The northern subsidiary became embroiled in a £2m fraud inquiry which saw chief executive Ronald Smith sacked after losing the board's confidence in his ability to lead the company.

Mr Smith, who was not involved in the fraud inquiry, is claiming £450,000 for wrongful dismissal and an agreement is expected to be settled with him in the next month. Wainhomes is also pursuing a civil action against contractors. While all this was going on, a rival housebuilder Bellway took advantage of Wainhomes' weakened share price to pick up a 4.8 per cent stake at 75p-80p a share, against last night's closing price of 103.5p, up 3p.

Unearthing the irregularities prompted Wainhomes to reshape its business, the full benefits of which have yet to come through. In the six months to September, group pre-tax profits fell to £1.75m from £4.25m a year ago on sales of £45.1m (£48.2m). The 1.5p dividend was maintained, covered by earnings of 1.9p (4.5p).

But dependence on the sluggish North-west of England market was reduced from 57 to 50 per cent after Wainhomes paid £24.5m for 2,045 plots in southern England. The average house price rose to £82,582 from £76,123, reflecting larger units sold.

The number of houses sold dropped to 546 (533) as Wainhomes deliberately scaled down its marketing efforts, but reservations in the first 10 weeks since 30 September are "substantially higher" than in the same period last year.

NorWest raised its full-year forecast by £200,000 to £6.5m, implying a price/earnings ratio of 15. Cheap if Bill Ainscough, the new chief executive, delivers on his promise to get return on capital up from 4.4 per cent to 10 per cent within 18 months just by managing the business better.

Hydro to boost output south of the border

Michael Harrison

Hydro-Electric, the Scottish power producer, yesterday unveiled plans for further investment in generating capacity south of the border while also holding out the prospect of a windfall payout to shareholders.

The group is negotiating to buy Norweb's 50 per cent stake in the Keadby power station in Scunthorpe in a deal which is likely to cost it around £240m-£250m.

Hydro-Electric already owns the other half of the station and has been selected as preferred bidder for the Norweb stake which is being disposed of by United Utilities. The group formed out of North West Water's acquisition of the regional electricity company.

The Keadby deal will increase the amount of electricity Hydro is generating for England and Wales to 2,000 megawatts. By 1999 when the Seabank gas-fired plant in Bristol is on stream, more than half of Hydro's output will be sold in England and Wales.

The Keadby acquisition, together with payment for Seabank, which is jointly owned with British Gas, will raise Hydro's gearing to 65 per cent. But its chief executive Roger Young, nevertheless estimated that Hydro will still have the capacity to return about £200m of its capital to shareholders. This is more than enough to fund a buyback of 10 per cent of its shares. Alternatively, Hydro could reward shareholders with a 50p special dividend.

Mr Young said that the company would wait until the end of the financial year to decide whether to seek further investment opportunities or return cash to shareholders. Another area it is actively looking at is setting up deals to sell electricity direct to domestic customers once the market in England and Wales is opened up in 1998.

Hydro is examining so-called "affinity partnerships" whereby it would supply the electricity for sale through a well-known brand such as a supermarket chain or bank. "We would like to enter the domestic market and I am beginning to think this is the best means of doing so," said Mr Young.



Roger Young: Still expects to return £200m to Investors

months to the end of September. This forced Hydro to buy in extra quantities of coal to meet demand from its Scottish customers. Without the extra coal burn, profits would have been £5m higher than last year's £61.7m.

The strong underlying performance of the business, driven by further development of its interests south of the border, encouraged Hydro to increase its payout at the interim stage by 11 per cent to 5.3p. Previously it had set a target of growing dividends by 6 per cent in real terms.

The Keadby and Seabank power stations generate 1,400 megawatts of electricity and form the central part of Hydro's expansion plans outside Scotland.

It had planned to enter the retail power market in a big way by buying British Gas's North of England and Scottish supply business but the deal was scrapped after BG decided it could not negotiate this deal and demerge its pipeline and supply businesses at the same time.

Budget changes 'mean rethink on investment'

London Electricity, which is in talks to merge its supply business with that of Northern Electric to fend off hostile US bidders, warned yesterday that it was reviewing its long-term investment plans following changes in capital allowances announced in last month's Budget, writes Michael Harrison.

Mr Young nevertheless estimated that Hydro will still have the capacity to return about £200m of its capital to shareholders. This is more than enough to fund a buyback of 10 per cent of its shares. Alternatively, Hydro could reward shareholders with a 50p special dividend.

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In the first half of the year London's capital expenditure reached nearly £60m, of which £29m was spent on replacing and modernising its infrastructure.

It has a further £200m committed to a portfolio of projects involving the airports group BAA, the Channel Tunnel rail link and the Docklands Light Railway.

But investment in assets with

DTI charges Levitt with breaking ban

Jill Treanor

Banking Correspondent

Magistrate's Court on Monday next week.

The action, which was instigated by the DTI on 20 November, also charges Michael Jacobs, a director of the firm, with aiding and abetting Mr Levitt.

The DTI also issued charges under section 447 of the Companies Act 1985 against Mark Segal, Cecil Halpin and John Wiffen for making statements which they knew were false that Mr Levitt was not involved in the management of the company.

If found guilty, then the charges against Mr Levitt could carry a six-month jail term or a £5,000 fine if the case is conducted in the magistrate's court in a crown court, the maximum

penalty that could be imposed is two years in prison.

He managed money for wealthy and famous people through his financial services firm, The Levitt Group, which collapsed in December 1990 with debts of £34m.

Mr Levitt is a keen sports fan. He has acted as commercial manager to Lennox Lewis, the former world heavyweight boxer champion.

His connection with boxing continues via International Boxing Corporation which manages the affairs of Alfred Kotey, a star boxer from Ghana.

In the past he is thought to have owned nearly 1 per cent of Arsenal, the Premier League football club based in north London.

Rights issue to ward off receivers at Wickes

Patrick Tooher

Wickes, the do-it-yourself retailer whose former bosses are being investigated for fraud, yesterday warned shareholders that the company faced receivership unless they backed a large refinancing package.

In a letter to shareholders, Wickes' chairman Michael von Brentano said: "Unless the resolutions are approved by shareholders, the group is likely to be unable to continue to trade."

An extraordinary general meeting on 6 January 1997 will vote on the refinancing proposal, the centrepieces of which are a deeply-discounted rights issue to raise £33.2m, new banking facilities of £5.2m and a £100m capital reduction.

Under the terms of the rights issue, it is fully underwritten by SBC Warburg, investors are being offered one new share at the equivalent price of 1.5p for every share held. Trading in Wickes' shares was suspended at 69p in June after the discovery that past profits had been overstated by £5m led to the resignation of £1m-a-year chairman Henry Sweetbain.

"The dilution is pretty horrible," said Nick Bubb, retail analyst at Mees Pierson. "It does reduce my estimate of Wickes' value from about 50p to 25p."

But Bill Hoskins, Wickes' finance director, defended the rights issue terms. "It became clear during September that there would be a larger hole in the balance sheet, therefore it required a bigger than normal discount to get the rights issue away," he said.

Analysts believe Wickes is now open to an estimated £200m takeover by the likes of building materials group RMC or rival DIY retailer B&Q, owned by Kingfisher. However, Wickes played down talk of a bid. "We've had nothing further than expressions of interest," said Bill Grimsey, Wickes' chief executive.

The accounting debacle over supplier rebates has forced Wickes to restate its accounts for 1995. These now show a loss before tax of £279.3m, £21.3m more than originally reported.

Wickes said it expected to make a loss before tax in 1996 of not more than £56m, with a deficit of £52.7m pounds reported for the nine months to September 28. No interim dividend will be paid in 1996 or 1997, though a final pay-out is possible in 1997.

As expected, Wickes has put its loss-making European businesses in France, Belgium and Holland up for sale to concentrate on its core UK outlets. It has also sold its conservatory business in the US.

Mr von Brentano said the investigation into former Wickes bosses by the Metropolitan Police and Serious Fraud Office which began last month was not expected to result in any liability for the group.

He also confirmed that Sandford Sigoloff, a US non-executive director closely linked to Mr Sweetbain, would resign in the foreseeable future.

Under the terms of the rights issue, it is fully underwritten by SBC Warburg, investors are being offered one new share at the equivalent price of 1.5p for every share held. Trading in Wickes' shares was suspended at 69p in June after the discovery that past profits had been overstated by £5m led to the resignation of £1m-a-year chairman Henry Sweetbain.

"The dilution is pretty horrible," said Nick Bubb, retail analyst at Mees Pierson. "It does reduce my estimate of Wickes' value from about 50p to 25p."

But Bill Hoskins, Wickes' finance director, defended the rights issue terms. "It became clear during September that there would be a larger hole in the balance sheet, therefore it required a bigger than normal discount to get the rights issue away," he said.

Analysts believe Wickes is now open to an estimated £200m takeover by the likes of building materials group RMC or rival DIY retailer B&Q, owned by Kingfisher.

As part of plans to exit peripheral and poorly performing businesses, the group has sold its loss-making US mail order

business and said negotiations for the sale of Papercrete, a loss-making retail chain, were at an advanced stage, with a conditional contract having been exchanged. Analysts said the two disposals would eliminate annual losses of between £2m and £2.5m, including a £1.4m loss in the first half.

Even so, Sean Eddie at NatWest Markets shaved his full-year profits forecast by a further £2m to £29m yesterday.

Forecasts were around £60m before last month's warning.

Agency mail order accounted for £2.6m of the group profits shortfall in the latest six months, although some of the £7.5m drop in sales reported in November has been clawed back with an extra £4m marketing campaign, leaving them down £5.2m. The group blamed the recent postal strikes for around £1.1m of the profits downturn.

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business

Britain's brilliant career in the services sector proves a myth

Britain is better placed than most to take advantage of a euro, according to the Chancellor in his speech to the House of Commons this week. Because British firms are so competitive, argued Ken Clarke, they will be able to leap in fast and enjoy the benefits of a truly single market brimming with euros.

It seems Mr Clarke believes British firms are ahead of the game, at least compared with their European counterparts.

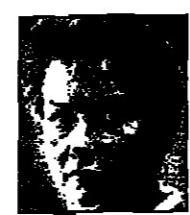
Service sector success was supposed to be our salvation, allowing us to shrug our shoulders at our poor manufacturing record. The service sector now accounts for substantially more output, more employment, and particularly more employment growth, than manufacturing in every Western country.

In Britain, 40 per cent of jobs are in so-called market services – private sector services including everything from banking to hotels, but excluding public services and personal services like hairdressing. Only 17.5 per cent of jobs are still in manufacturing. The same story holds true for output: 37 per cent of our GDP is produced by our market services, compared to only 18 per cent by manufacturing industry.

Squaring up to them, according to the story, are clumsy, fussy European monstrosities, complacent after decades cosseted in a cosy, corporatist pre-Thatcherite world. Where British companies can supposedly deploy their workers in the most efficient and creative way (thanks to that flexible labour market), French and German companies are – we are told – held back by archaic labour market legislation.

But something in this tale just doesn't add up. If British firms were really so efficient, and so uniquely able to deploy labour in the best possible way, UK productivity should be high and rising. Output per worker should be higher in Britain than in Germany or France – at least in the service sector where we supposedly excel.

The truth is very different. New research suggests that Britain's employees are less efficiently employed than our counterparts in the US, France and Germany. Not just in manufacturing (where we have long known of our weaknesses) but in the service sector too, British productivity levels lag



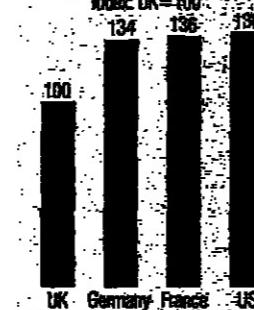
Yvette Cooper

Employment growth can't explain away the productivity gap. Since 1979 we have had one of the slowest job creation rates in Europe

added by a UK worker, the US employee adds £1.38 in the same period). France's service sector productivity is 36 per cent higher, and Germany's 34 per cent higher.

Even more surprising, they found that the gap between British and French or German

Relative productivity in market services



Index = UK = 100

performance was bigger in the service sector than in manufacturing. So our bankers, hoteliers and retailers are at more of a disadvantage compared to their European counterparts than UK car manufacturers.

Keen to find something we might be good at, the economists split the service sector down even further. But in every sector the results were broadly the same: US retailers were 44 per cent more productive than British retail workers. In hotels and catering, and in communications, our employees are more productive than the Germans, but the French and the Americans still beat us hands down. Even in banking and finance – the one thing we are supposed to excel in thanks to the City – our workers are less productive.

O'Mahony et al concede that if you break industries down even further there may be specific things we are very good at. For example, the Brits may indeed be the most productive foreign exchange dealers in the world. But in the research these NIESR economists have carried out, we emerge as extremely successful (compared to France and the US at least) in only one area: selling insurance.

The big question is: why are we so unproductive? From one point of view, low productivity need not be a bad thing; all it could mean is that more people are employed.

More people providing the same level of services and sharing the proceeds between themselves could be better for society than having a few people working hard and paid well while everyone else draws the dole. For example, Japan is a sector, which is heavily overstaffed, but which is tolerated because it keeps a lot of people in work.

There is some limited evidence to suggest that productivity growth was lower in Britain compared to Germany because we expanded service sector employment faster than

they did. As market services grew in both countries between 1979 and 1989, service sector employment grew faster in Britain, while service sector productivity grew faster in Germany.

Even so, employment growth can't explain away the productivity gap. Our job creation record is too miserable for that. Since 1979, we have had one of the slowest job creation rates in Europe. Moreover no one in this downsizing, hire-and-fire culture, could plausibly believe that the British service sector is deliberately overstuffed for social purposes. The Japanese example is not being replicated here.

So we shall have to look elsewhere for explanations of the persistent productivity gap. The British failure to invest properly, particularly in skills but also in infrastructure, emerges as a strong suspect. The same criticisms that have been made of our manufacturing record – inadequate investment, poor education and skills, bad management – for so long appear to be relevant for our service sector too.

So Mr Clarke should sound a little less optimistic about Britain's ability to make the most of any economic opportunity a single currency zone might deliver. British companies in both manufacturing and services may be doing well relative to their European counterparts simply because we have emerged from recession rather earlier than France or Germany. But the underlying efficiency of British business – and the skills, infrastructure and climate for investment on which our companies depend – still leave much to be desired.

**Productivity in Market Services: International Comparisons*, Mary O'Mahony, Nicholas Oulton and Jennifer Vass, discussion paper No 105, National Institute of Economic and Social Research, 2 Dean Trench St, London SW1P 3HE

Rolling up in his Merc as the Tup pubs roll out ...

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



Cesari Romiti's former PR is to edit Italy's 'Il Sole'

country's most prestigious financial daily is an interesting addition – akin perhaps to Sir Tim Bell taking over Richard Lambert's chair at the FT.

Those *Il Sole* journalists who are not like the new setup are entitled to vote on Mr Auci's appointment in the new year. But it won't do them much good. The Italian weekly *Panorama*, which is owned by the former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, recently appointed one Juliano Ferrara as editor. Mr Ferrara failed on a show of hands on the editorial floor.

But he still got the job courtesy of the fact that his last post was as minister and chief spokesman in ... er ... the Berlusconi government.

But round of Royal goings on in Hemsley, north Yorkshire. Both Viscount Linley and Lord Lichfield were in the town the other day for a spot of shooting on the North York moors. They were staying at The Black Swan and both took time to pop into the local second-hand bookshop.

Viscount Linley and his wife were the first to drop by. They were busy browsing when Selina Linley suddenly cried: "Darling, they've got your book," pulling out a glossy tome on "extra-ordinary furniture." The bookseller promptly signed it and then took on the market leaders.

Dyson, who sponsored Sir Ranulph Fiennes in his recently aborted bid to walk unassisted across Antarctica, had originally published only a limited edition of the title to support his exhibition at the Design Museum in London. Then Selfridges asked if he would do a book signing at the Oxford Street store. A further print run has now been ordered and the intrepid auction merchant will be at Selfridges tomorrow to sign them.

Nigel Cope

James Dyson, the entrepreneur who developed the super-soaraway Dyson vacuum cleaner, is now cleaning up with a new book. *Doing A Dyson* is a "how-to" tome charting the growth of the Dyson product with tips on simple little things like how to invent new technology, manufacture it and then take on the market leaders.

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Foreign Exchange Rates

Currency	Sterling			Dollar		
	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	16582	97	34-31	1000	—	—
Canada	22508	54-49	135-137	24-23	75-73	87-92
Germany	25501	69-61	203-193	154-159	30-38	59-67
France	68610	27-18	640-608	522-527	28-35	529-538
Italy	23337	103-123	520-520	23-35	91-107	88-92
Japan	10737	95-91	103-105	13-14	44-47	105-104
UK	12021	102-102	102-102	7-7	20-21	20-21
Belgium	52785	55-50	202-202	12-14	45-47	10-11
Denmark	58022	222-227	655-655	59-59	202-207	32-32
Ireland	27813	62-74	240-246	17-18	39-37	12-15
Norway	10873	5-1	10-10	16-16	6-6	10-10
Spain	21561	12-21	31-38	10-10	20-20	12-15
Sweden	11292	15-18	44-43	9-10	152-161	4-4
Switzerland	27811	85-75	229-225	13-13	40-37	19-19
Australia	20105	10-15	25-25	12-12	41-45	8-8
Hong Kong	12267	93-92	240-243	2-2	20-20	5-5
New Zealand	23711	64-71	155-158	1-1	27-30	5-5
Saudi Arabia	61282	0-0	0-0	2-2	50-50	0-0
Singapore	23984	0-0	0-0	3-3	37-35	0-0

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	16584	88-89	Colombia	122-128	789-1000
Austria	181933	708144	Costa Rica	0-0	0-0
Brazil	17165	103-107	Denmark	62-65	407-408
Chile	137655	82395	Egypt	43-5075	263400
Finland	56450	34081	Portugal	25-678	156000
Greece	76552	45255	Qatar	60361	35-38
Ghana	285142	72000	Russia	91918	542-540
Hong Kong	40485	24070	South Africa	78249	47-50
India	65305	358850	Taiwan	45547	27-30
Kuwait	4976	0-0	UAE	60920	37-33

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subtract from spot rate to find the premium. *Denotes a reciprocal. For the latest rates see page 609 or 081 223 3033. Calls cost 50p per minute (daytime) 45p other times.

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sport

McCoy may miss Pipe party

Racing

CHRIS CORRIGAN

Martin Pipe stands on the brink of reaching another century of winners in a season after gaining his 99th victory yesterday—but the stable's favoured rider, Tony McCoy, is unlikely to be joining the ton-up party.

McCoy was ruled out of action for today and tomorrow following a fall at Taunton. After concussion was diagnosed, the jockey was stood down for three days. This means he misses promising rides at Cheltenham today and Lingfield tomorrow which seem almost certain to clinch Pipe's century.

Adrian Maguire, McCoy's nearest pursuer in the jump jockeys' title race, may also miss Cheltenham today, because of influenza.

McCoy, who is on the 115-winner mark, was on Ikarasab in

the West Hatch Novice Hurdle yesterday when the horse fell in fifth place.

The season's leading jump jockey was then badly kicked by another runner. He lay motionless for a while but eventually walked away from the incident to be brought back in an ambulance.

McCoy's condition meant he was forced to give up his remaining booked rides on the Taunton card, including the Pipe-trained Out Ranking in the final event. This multiple winner duly won with Richard Hughes in the saddle, taking the yard on to the 99 mark.

"McCoy will miss the next two days as the rules state that if the concussion is of a minor nature the jockey cannot ride for three days," said racecourse doctor Roger Lambert.

Pipe was not at Taunton but the trainer's assistant, Chester

Barnes, said: "I suppose we've got to wait another day for the century and I don't know how many runners we'll have over the weekend with Tony out of action."

It compounded a bad week for McCoy, who had to give up his sole ride at Leicester on Wednesday after a fall at

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Barbason
(Lingfield 11.55)
NB: Myontaine
(Lingfield 12.25)

Plumpton on Tuesday which left him bruised.

At Sandown yesterday, Adrian Maguire whittled down his rival's lead to 59 with a hat-trick on Hurricane Lamp, Potter's Bay and Stately Home.

He narrowly missed out on a four-timer when Jack Tamer, the 1-4 favourite for the novice

stayers' hurdle, went down by a head to Yahmi in a driving finish up the hill.

But Maguire later revealed he was feeling under the weather and might not be fit for Cheltenham today. "I'm dying of the flu and might not ride tomorrow," he said. "I will talk to David Nicholson and see how I am in the morning."

Richard Dumwoody, 65 winners behind McCoy, seemed in rude health at Fakenham, where he reached the 50 mark for the season when steering The Lancer to victory at Fakenham.

Dumwoody's mount appeared to be dropping out of contention with three fences to jump, but the rider had merely been giving the 6-4 favourite a breather after being prominent from the start. The partnership came with a renewed challenge from the home bend to beat Dr Rocket by two and a half lengths.

Dumwoody had earlier initiated a double with Le Tete, who galloped right through the last flight in the juvenile novice hurdle, but it did not stop him.

The former champion jockey sat tight on the winner, another 6-4 favourite, and they came home two lengths clear of Desert Mountain.

Inccalicoch, a good winner at Sandown yesterday, is a doubtful runner for the Tripleprint Gold Cup at Cheltenham tomorrow. "I'm frightened the track might be slippery again," trainer Jeff King said afterwards.

Still on course for the Cheltenham event, though, is Addington Boy, Gordon Richards, his trainer, is expected to send the eight-year-old on the journey from Pestrif for a race which carries £60,000 in added prize money. Tony Dobbins will ride.



Big race hope Addington Boy goes for the Tripleprint Gold Cup Handicap Chase at Cheltenham tomorrow

Paddy's in the entries

A total of 48 horses have been entered for the Ladbroke Handicap Hurdle at Leopardstown on 11 January. There is the usual strong contingent of British-trained entries.

The home entries are headed by Urobande, winner of the Sun Alliance Novice Hurdle at the Cheltenham Festival last March before following up in

the Aintree Hurdle on Grand National day, and Family Way, who finished runner-up in the big race last year.

For Britain, Paddy's Return, who landed the Triumph Hurdle at the Cheltenham Festival, is among the entries along with the unbeaten Penny A Day. The weight for the race will be assigned at Ascot three weeks ago can be ig-

CHELTENHAM
1.55: Chay-Yo hails from a stable in fine form and his second to Mister Morose at Newbury last time was a solid effort. Faster ground and a 4lb rise in his handicaps rating could make things difficult today, however. SOVEREIGNS PARADE, now fitted with blinkers for the first time, looks the one. This four-year-old seems to be a sound second and a fair chance to figure in a competitive handicap race by Executive Director at Ascot three weeks ago can be ig-

nored. Mick Fitzgerald's mount was in need of that first run of the season and the jockey eased his mount in the closing stages.

HYPERION'S TIPS
noted. Mick Fitzgerald's mount was in need of that first run of the season and the jockey eased his mount in the closing stages.

2.96: GLEAMSTED seemed not to quite last out the trip when fading in the final furlong of the 3m3f Becher Chase, won by Into The Red, at Aintree last month. That third placing was still a respectable effort. But it was the previous run by the gelding that emphasises his prospects here. The eight-year-old was run-up to Condition 2000 at Wincanton giving the subsequent Honeymead Gold Cup winner Sir B. King. Baileys charge runs off the same handicap mark to day and should comfortably take care of Yorkshire Gale.

3.05: SHADIRWIN will have his supporters here, but this thorough stallion on the Flat would ideally be suited by a longer trip than confronts him today. Daraydas must enter calculations after winning in fine style on his hunting bow. Shadirwin's 10-year-old son has been jumping swashbucklingly when a poor sixth to Mighty Moss at Cheltenham. CARLITO ERICAGNE performed with credit on fast ground on the Flat. The potential of his jumping debut at Ascot last month can be realised here.

3.46: LOCHINGRAN is on the trail of a four-race win in a row at Newbury. He last week but the combination of a 4lb penalty and tough competition may find him out today. Dystar was a middling race at Ascot last month and that form could be suspect. SWING QUARTET is from a yard usually to be feared in this kind of event, but the mare has to carry 6lb more than her proper handicap mark. One who will certainly appreciate fast going is GLEN-GARRIF GIRL. She was brought down at Cheltenham last time.

Hall, who is still waiting for the ARL to assign him a club, could now solve Wigan's problems at hooker for the games against Saints, Mick Cassidy, the player earmarked as Hall's replacement in the role, is recovering from a knee operation and Wigan have no other experienced hooker.

Andy Farrell, the Wigan and Great Britain captain, has been forced to abandon a week's commando course in Devon in order to see a specialist about the hip injury that troubled him during the latter stages of the Lions' tour of New Zealand.

Leeds have continued their rebuilding by signing the forward Jamie Mathiou from the North Queensland Cowboys.

The capture of Mathiou, 6ft 1in and 16st, came 24 hours after the arrival of the Sheffield trio of Ryan Sheridan, Dean Lawford and Andrew Farrell.

Mathiou, a former Australian schoolboy international, will fly in next week and make his debut against Halifax on Boxing Day.

Gary Hetherington, the Leeds chief executive, said: "Jamie will prove a big asset to our squad and he is further proof of our intention to be competing on equal terms with our competitors in Super League next year."

IAAF to treble its money

Athletics

Primo Nebiolo, president of the International Amateur Athletic Federation, will today announce that a total of \$10m (£6.2m) in prize-money will be available to athletes next year, trebling the total last season.

A two-day IAAF council meeting in Monaco decided that prize money for the grand prix final in Fukuoka, Japan, will remain at \$3,388,000 (£210,000) while money is awarded for the first time at the world outdoor and indoor championships in Athens and Paris. World records in Athens will earn a prize of \$100,000 (£62,000).

The IAAF's commitment comes at a time when the federation has still to find a sponsor for its grand prix circuit. After severing its ties with Mobil last year the IAAF paid \$2m (£125m) of its own money this year to help support the circuit and will pay a similar amount next season.

The federation has apparently been given only \$8m by the International Olympic Committee from Atlanta Olympic ticket revenues totalling over \$72m for athletics.

The 1998 grand prix final has been awarded to Moscow and Nagoya, Japan, hosts the 1999 world indoor championships.

The dedicated Edward Hamalainen will be allowed compete for Finland next year. Hamalainen won a silver medal for Belarus at the 1993 and 1995 world championships.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football

7.30 unless stated

EUROPEAN UNDER-21 CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP SEVEN

Wales v Italy (at Eugene City Park, Ebbw Vale)

SECOND DIVISION

Portsmouth v Blackpool (7.45)

URUGUAY INTERNATIONAL: Scotland v Northern Ireland (7.45)

ANGLO-WELSH CUP Pool 3B: Wales v Sale (7.15)

CLUB MATCHES: Bedford v Lancaster; Bury v Leyton (7.0); Carlisle United v Morecambe; Forest Green Rovers v Gloucester City; Preston v Blackpool; Gillingham v Millwall; Yeovil Town v Bristol City; Walsall v Wrexham

FOOTBALL LEAGUE

SECOND DIVISION

Portsmouth v Blackpool (7.45)

Rugby Union

7.30 unless stated

INTERNATIONAL: Scotland v France (at Edinburgh)

YOUTH MATCHES: England A v Scotland (at Greenwich)

ANGLO-WELSH CUP Pool 3B: Wales v Sale (7.15)

CLUB MATCHES: Bedford v Lancaster; Bury v Leyton (7.0); Carlisle United v Morecambe; Forest Green Rovers v Gloucester City; Preston v Blackpool; Gillingham v Millwall; Yeovil Town v Bristol City; Walsall v Wrexham

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RAILWAY UNION: Wales v Northern Ireland (at Greenwich)

RAIL

sport

Bury fashion own line in success

Guy Hodgson on a Second Division club who are proving the benefit of positive thinking

If you wanted to explore football's "if onlys" by travelling along one road you could do worse than take the A56. Old Trafford, home of the richest club in the world (self-proclaimed), lies just off the Chester road, 12 miles north there is Gigg Lane and, as they say locally, there is unfashionable and there is Bury.

A hundred years ago there was a similar power divide except then the more northerly club were in the ascendant. Bury were about to win the FA Cup twice in four seasons – with an aggregate score of 10-0 no less – while Newton Heath, now known as Manchester United, were heading for bankruptcy. Destiny is not always mapped out by a good start to life.

Which makes the bright times appreciated all the more and you have to go back a long way since things have looked so promising at Bury. Newly promoted, they are third in the Second Division, one point off the lead with a game in hand, and could go top of the table tomorrow with a victory at Gillingham. They may have been overtaken, and some, by Manchester United but they are at least thriving in a league of their own.

"Our ambition this year is to stay in the Second Division," Stan Ternent, their manager, said, "and at the moment we're ahead of schedule. The sooner we get to 50 points and ensure our survival the better, then we can all relax a bit."

Ternent is the sort of manager who never gets a mention when it comes to the game of naming successors for high profile jobs, yet he has performed minor wonders on a budget that even clubs in Bury's division (Bristol City, Watford, Preston and Millwall come to mind) would find derisory. Before that, he had success at Bradford, Hull and, as assistant manager, to Steve Coppell at Crystal Palace.

Bury's financial position, which would be virtually untenable without the help of their London-based benefactor,



High ground: Stan Ternent's Bury side are on the crest of a wave with top spot in the Second Division beckoning

Photograph: Peter Jay

Hugh Eaves, is allied to geography. Potential supporters are within an hour's drive of five Premiership clubs and given the choice of watching the Yeoballs and Fowlers of this world rather than Wycombe or Gillingham they have voted with their feet.

A 4,000 crowd at Gigg Lane is reason for satisfaction. 5,000 a party.

Players, too, find the magnetic draw of bigger clubs irresistible as the workplace of Gary and Phil Neville, whose parents are employed by Bury, testifies. Yet while many clubs in what estate agents call the M62 corridor represent the Premiership's increasing pulling power, Bury stress the positive. They are not supping with the devil but have

made an accommodation with him and Manchester United's reserve team use Gigg Lane as their home.

"United don't come into the equation," Ternent said. "Their fans are all season ticket holders and you couldn't get a ticket for Old Trafford if you tried.

Liverpool and Blackburn are similar. And there's the flip side.

Not every player can get into the first team at the bigger clubs and we're in an ideal position to monitor that."

What about Bury as a potential junior side for Manchester United? "I wouldn't mind some of their juniors," Ternent replied quick as a flash, before adding: "The bigger clubs are going to get even bigger and it's feasible that Bury might become a nursery club. But it's some way down the road and there's a lot of competition round here. Stockport County, Rochdale or any number of clubs might fancy the idea themselves."

"There would also be a reluctance to lose the club's identity. Great players like Colin Bell and Neville Southall began their careers at Bury and we've got a good crop of youngsters coming through. I wouldn't mind being here in two or three years' time to see how they've developed."

The fate of Mick Walsh, who brought expectation and Ternent to Gigg Lane and was later dismissed, illustrates the chance element in football management that makes even projections into the near future risky. Then there is the stress that laid Coppell low at Manchester City and afflicts everyone running football team.

"He's a close friend, Steve," Ternent said of Coppell. "I was absolutely amazed when he left Maine Road. He's a very good football manager and an honest lad who is mentally extremely tough, so there'll be a good reason behind his decision. But if it's down to the hassle of management I can well understand why."

The problem for Ternent is the anticipation that is growing in Bury. "Everything is rosy in the garden at the moment but the test will come when we lose three or four on the trot. So far we have the knack of winning straight after a defeat but a blip will come and we have to see how we will deal with it. Knowing Bury it'll be well. We're a family club, we're all in it together and if there's a problem we all have a say."

United Arab Emirates

The Asian Cup matches between such politically sensitive opponents as Iran and Iraq, and Saudi Arabia and Iraq, have – so far – passed off peacefully both on and off the pitch. The biggest fuss at the tournament this week has, it seems, been caused by... helicopters.

Kuwait complained that helicopters hovering over the Zayed stadium in Abu Dhabi had distracted their players during their 3-2 defeat to the host nation, the United Arab Emirates. The Kuwaitis squandered a first-half two-goal lead to lose the match.

"I have directed the higher Organising Committee that there shall not be any further helicopter flights directly over the stadium during matches," Peter Velapam, the secretary general of the Asian Football Confederation said.

Despite their airborne distractions, Kuwait managed to qualify for the quarter-finals, where they will face Japan on Sunday. That is a fortunate turn of events, for if they had had to face Iraq, their Gulf War invaders, they would have withdrawn from the tournament. Iraq, who have done better than expected at the tournament, face the hosts, the UAE, instead.

Penev said that the Bulgarian football union, UBF, had not told him he had been dropped from the national side, leaving him to hear about it from the media. The UBF will hold a special meeting on 20 December, after accusations by some clubs of mismanagement.

Netherlands

Some of the most powerful and profitable Dutch clubs are considering setting up a new super league, according to reports yesterday in the Netherlands. A meeting of top club chairmen is planned for tomorrow in Eindhoven, where the formation of a smaller top division will apparently be discussed.

The current Honor Division, the top league, has 18 clubs. A PSV Eindhoven spokesman said that the meeting was "a brain-storming session" and claimed not to know what was on the agenda.

Ajax, Feyenoord and PSV would obviously be part of any new league – and there have been rumours that top Belgian clubs like Anderlecht might be involved.

The meeting comes at a time when the administration of football in the Netherlands is in crisis following the resignation of the board of directors of the Dutch Football Association over a failed television sports channel. Ajax and Feyenoord effectively scuppered the channel by



around the world

disputing its right to broadcast their matches live. The channel, Sport 7, was scrapped last weekend amid mounting debts and poor ratings.

Bulgaria

All is not well within the Bulgarian national team, where internal strife seems rife. One of their leading strikers, Lyuboslav Penev, has demanded the resignation of top football officials and has said he will boycott tomorrow's World Cup qualifier against Cyprus.

"I will always play for Bulgaria, but not while this management is in power," Penev said on Bulgarian television when he appeared with fellow player Hristo Stoichkov on Monday. Penev had been dropped for making offensive comments during a television interview after Euro 96, and was not recalled until this weekend's game.

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Italy

Italian male striptease artists revealed plans this week to form a "national" team to raise money for charity. The self-styled Italian national striptease soccer federation said they would train twice a week and play together every two weeks.

A spokesman said they would play in white and blue shirts rather than their usual working attire. "No loin-cloths, we prefer a classical uniform," the captain and federation president, "Nicolás", said. "After all, we are professional strip artists, not gigolos." They will be coached by the former Roma defender Enzo Romano, who now runs a gym.

Rupert Metcalf

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CITIZEN Eco-Drive

League extends its deadline

Non-League notebook

RUPERT METCALF

GM Vauxhall Conference clubs are to give another three months to ensure their grounds are up to the required standard to gain acceptance to the Football League, which has extended the deadline for the Conference champions to meet its stipulations from New Year's Eve until 1 April.

In the past three seasons the Conference winners – Kidderminster Harriers, Macclesfield Town and Stevenage Borough – have been denied promotion because they failed to improve their grounds by 31 December. The new April deadline was prompted by comments made

by the judge in the unsuccessful High Court case brought by Stevenage against the League, when they protested against their exclusion.

Chris Hull, a League spokesman, said: "The High Court found in favour of the Football League, but we listened to the comments made by the judge and felt it necessary to revise the rules and amend them accordingly. The proviso that the assets of clubs coming into the Football League must outweigh their liabilities for them to gain acceptance into the League will no longer be in place.

"However, the League will still be looking at clubs' finances... to make sure they are in reasonable health and not in receivership."

The Kidderminster manager, Graham Allier, said: "It's a move in the right direction but, as time goes on, I think the rule will become more irrelevant because more and more clubs in the Conference will get their grounds up to standard as a matter of course."

At the top of the Conference, Kidderminster, whose Aghoraghough ground is now fully adequate for the Football League, enjoy an 11-point lead after a 1-0 win at second-placed Macclesfield on Tuesday.

In the third round of the FA Carlsberg Vase tomorrow, Stamford will have plenty of Wembley experience on their side when they travel to Hinckley Athletic. The Lincolnshire side can field Dave Bennett and

Mickey Gynn, who played for Coventry City in their 1987 FA Cup final win over Tottenham – plus David Speedie, who performed at the national stadium for Scotland against England the previous year.

Speedie, the former Chelsea and Coventry striker, plays in midfield for the Uchlins United Counties League club, who also have two former Peterborough men: Milton Graham and Trevor Quow. Graham is in good form up front, having scored a hat-trick in last weekend's 3-1 win over Eynesbury.

Stamford won the Vase in 1980 and were runners-up in '76 and '84. The biggest Vase crowd could be at Fairfax Park though, where Bridgwater entertain their Somerset rivals, Taunton.

Old golden spikes speaks

Among the quotations which punctuate Michael Johnson's account of his life is one by a sixth-century Chinese philosopher, Lao-tzu: "He who conquers others is strong; he who conquers himself is mighty."

By that token, the 29-year-old Texan who this summer became the first man to win Olympic 200 and 400 metres titles is, well, mighty strong. No one has beaten him over one lap since 1989, and his achievement in lowering his own 200m world record to 19.32sec in Atlanta was one of the all-time great Olympic performances.

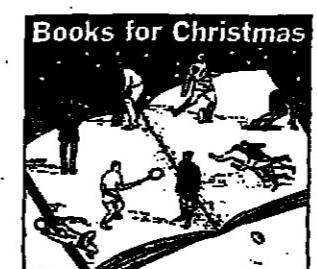
Johnson is an exceptional athlete, and his book – an exhaustive self-scrutiny – gives a real insight into what his endeavours have required.

Athletic performances are only a part of it. Here is a contender for the world record in positive thinking, a man whose victories have been forged within before he steps on to the track.

There are passing observations of others, and some devastating criticism of that other pre-eminent US athlete, Carl Lewis. But all this is a matter of a runner's peripheral vision as Johnson devotes himself to the implied challenge of the book's title – *Slaying The Dragon* (Piattus, £10.99).

"For each of us," he writes, "that dragon is the thing closest to the centre of our lives. It is our core, our ambition, and our joy. For me, it is the perfect race."

The key words for Johnson in fashioning his unmatched career are: consistency, order, self-discipline. Johnson's coach, Clyde Hart, tells the story of how he once discovered his charge training in a rainstorm when every other athlete had taken the day off. "You never know when



you might have to run in the rain," Johnson replied.

When he was studying "finite math" at Baylor University in 1987, and having grave difficulty in mastering it, he evaluated his position and recognised the fact that he was better at understanding binomial coefficients at 6am. "Finally," he said, "I did something very difficult for a college student. I began going to bed at 8pm. The style is the man."

What gives Johnson's narrative particular force is the fact that he has triumphed after traumatic experiences in previous Olympic years. In 1988, injury prevented him qualifying, and in 1992 his position as clear favourite for the 200 metres gold was calamitously undermined by the effects of food poisoning.

"I wondered if I would be one of those athletes who is at the top of his sport but never wins the biggest event," he writes. "Like a talented boxer who blows his only title shot or a great baseball player who never makes it to the World Series."

In the great tradition of all self-help manuals, Johnson explains how he turned such setbacks to his advantage in using them as a motivational tool. But the

earnestness which this book has in common with many another American self-help manual is tempered by little flashes of wry humour in the narrative.

"I hope to get married and start a family, although these goals need a different kind of planning... for instance, this is not a goal that will work: 'Memo to self: fall in love, April 1998.'

There are some things in this life that even Michael Johnson cannot control.

The subjects of Richard and Fiona Bailey's *The Road To Glory* (Quiller Press, £25) also have things in their life which they cannot control in the form of disabilities. But this photo-essay, subtitled "Portraits of Britain's Paralympians", is a book not about disability, but competitiveness.

"When I hear commentators say it is lovely that disabled people can take part in sport, and that they do it for fun, I think about all the times I got up at 5am, ride up a hill for five miles non-stop and almost collapse at the top from exhaustion," comments the cyclist Robert Allen. "The word fun is not on my mind. Winning is."

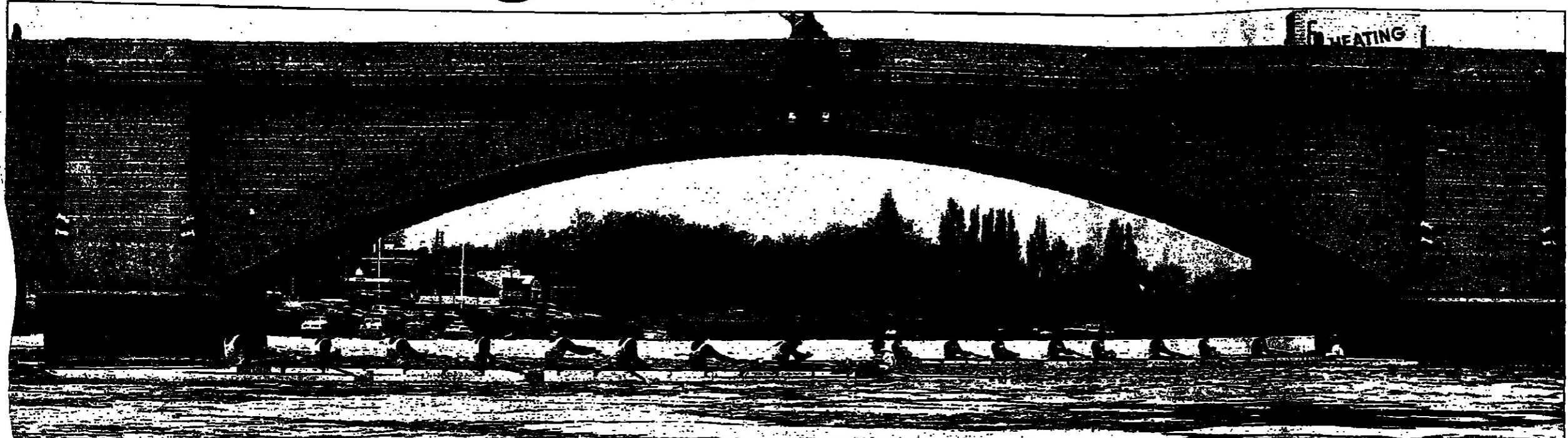
Black and white photos of a range of sports from athletics to powerlifting give graphic evidence that Allen's philosophy is a shared one.

The *Runner's Handbook* (Penguin, £9.99), by Bob Glover, is now designated as "all new" after updating this year. But it is packed with down-to-earth advice for the ordinary runner, from choosing a time for exercise or a pair of shoes to devising strategies to deal with aggressive dogs or people encountered en route. Humorous and informative – a good combination.

Mike Rowbottom

You're test
alright
bit now
your
test
alright
bit now
your

Home-grown Light Blues leave Innocence behind



Innocence (left) and the winners, Guilt, emerge from under Putney Bridge yesterday in a fast Cambridge University Boat Race trial, which was rowed in near perfect conditions

Rowing

UGH MATHESON

Cambridge University happily endorsed the permissive society by allowing "Guilt" to overtake "Innocence" in yesterday's oughty eights trial for the crew it take on Oxford in the Boat Race.

Guilt was stroked, on bow side by Roger Pim, who may well hold on to that position when the Blue Boat for the 29

March meeting with Oxford is formed in the new year. But much of its success came from the able backing of Christian Brun in the No 7 seat. These two won the reserves race last year along with Alan Watson, who was at No 6. One newcomer, at five, was Alex Storey, a 24-year-old freshman from the British Olympic eight in Atlanta.

Innocence was older and more foreign than Guilt. It was led by a Canadian, Brad Crombie, with a Dane, Damien Maltarp, at seven and the American president, Ethan Ayer, at No 5, but between those imports at six was the find of the year, Toby Wallace. He is a 22-year-old hockey player who has learned to row at

Cambridge. Although he was in the losing crew, his form held well throughout and, after this display, he will move up the bow-side rankings.

The winning crew did look the more cohesive, but the most significant difference was in the coxing of the British international Suzie Ellis, who was the inspiration for Guilt in word

as well as deed, and of Kevin Whyman, who, in spite of his winning his Blue last year, was treated as the innocent abroad on the Tideway. Ellis forced a clash in the second minute and was warmed through the remainder of the race.

She spent the entire course boring Whyman off the stream and at places, especially along

Chiswick Eyot, put herself off the best of the water to prevent him getting a sniff of it.

The river could hardly have given more help to produce the fast time, with a high tide running in fast and what little breeze there was pushing them along, but there is clearly plenty of talent for the first boat. Oxford is also on a high

through the coaching of René Mijnders, the Dutchman who took his national eight to Olympic gold. Oxford had the edge in such comparisons as were possible at the Four's Head and in the indoor championships, competed on rowing machines. But on this evidence the Light Blues will have a fast and efficient crew for the race.

Gatting wants Gooch's advice

Ricket

/LES HODGSON
Sports from Brisbane

ike Gatting will sit down with Graham Gooch and discuss the problems involved in combining playing career with being a lecturer after confirming his return to the England hierarchy yesterday.

The former England captain, who has successfully coached the A team around Australia, has been tipped as a possible candidate to join David Graveney and Gooch, the latter being the favourite to replace Raymond Illingworth as chairman on the selection panel next season.

"If I could do the job properly I would like to be a selector," Gatting said. "I wouldn't want to go into it half-cocked. If I could do it properly while still playing then perhaps yes, but I'm not too sure how well you can do that."

"I would have to ask Gooch how hard he found it. It didn't seem to affect his cricket that much. It depends how much time you have as I find myself on a few committee back home, and to do those properly as well as other things you could find yourself with too much on your plate."

If Gatting joined the selection panel he would be in the ideal

Indians wrap up series

India 237 & 400-7 dec
South Africa 177 & 180
India win by 280 runs

India wrapped up the third and final Test in Kanpur yesterday to complete their first series victory over South Africa.

India completed a 280-run victory on the final day of the final Test, dismissing South Africa for 180 as the tourists pursued an improbable target of 461 to win. The Indians are thus in good heart for their seven-week tour of South Africa, which begins on 19 December, and features a triangular limited-over series with the host country and Zimbabwe.

England A's hopes of continuing their success on the tour were hampered by overnight rain and bad light yesterday as play was restricted to just 85 minutes on the third day of their match against Queensland at the Gabba. Resuming on 154 for 4, the home side added 41 runs for the loss of Jerry Caselli.

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